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VISTAS

An Educational Publication

The V.O.L.N. Press

Merion Station
PA 19066

Founding Editor—Violette de Mazia

Editor—Ellen Homsey

Printed in the United States of America
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The essays, etc., appearing in the issues of this journal will, for the most part, be derived from the work of seminar students, alumni, and members of the staff of The Barnes Foundation Art Department. On occasion, we shall publish articles and pieces not directly concerned with the Foundation's philosophy but representing original work by the Art Department's students and outside contributors which the editorial staff considers to be of general interest to Vistas readers.

Violette de Mazia (1899–1988)

VISTAS

VOL. V Spring-Summer 1990 NO. 1

The Form of Seurat's "The Models"

An Analytical Study*

by Violette de Mazia**

"People see only what they are prepared to see."
—Emerson

IN the previous issue of VISTAS, we saw that the identity of the form of anything is determined by the specific relationships (how) of its specific matter (what) for the specific intent, purpose or function it serves (why).† To continue our investigation of this topic, we now plan to apply our findings to an analytic study of the form of a painting, for which we shall focus our attention particularly on Seurat's "The Models" (Plate 85).

We look at "The Models," as we look at any work of art, to see what the artist has done. And, as we look, each of us finds

*The material of this essay was originally presented by the author in class lectures at The Barnes Foundation.

**Former Director of Education of The Barnes Foundation Art Department.

†"Form," Vol. IV, No. 2 (Winter, 1988–89), pp. 55–56.

some sort of meaning in the painting. Likewise, each of us has his own individual feelings about it, which feelings no one else could guess, nor has anyone else the right to tell us what they should be.

What we feel is always a matter of a number of factors, all of which are dependent upon our various particular situations and are bound to be different in each of us. We feel things according, for instance, to our sensitivity, in both kind and degree, according to our general tendencies of mind, according to our interests and emotional responses, according to our habits in looking and responding and also according to our backgrounds, our personalities and our tastes and preferences. Some people invariably ask for the white meat of the chicken and some for the dark. Nor can we reach, we do not really want to reach, universal accord in what we feel. How would Jack Spratt and his wife ever get along if we did?

At the same time, along with the subjective aspect of our responses to what we meet, there is also an objective aspect, without which, clearly, communication would be impossible and all would be chaos. For, the fact is that our potential for understanding ourselves and each other, as well as the world around us, depends upon there being a verifiable actuality, an actuality with its own "itness," which, however variously we might *feel* about it, is perceived by us in more or less the same way and in more or less the same terms. In the case of a painting, as of all things, we can come to a fairly similar understanding of its nature and of what the artist has done by way of objective analysis of its form.

Using objectivity means, of course, that we leave our personal tastes out and also that we do not let our prejudices, our preconceptions, etc., influence our observations. People looking at "The Models" who react, as some have, by saying such things as "I can't stand it. Those dots—they're so annoying!" or who are upset at the space distortion do not come anywhere near an understanding of the painting. Their attitude arrests them at those feelings of annoyance and upset, blocking the passage to seeing what the dots and the space are and do, not to mention what the picture as a whole is and does, which is a good deal more than the identity and doings of the dots and the space.

While the meaning of "The Models" will, thanks to our in-

dividuality, necessarily differ with each one of us, as an object, it has features which no interested observer can escape. Among these are (1) its subject, or, rather, its subject-matter—that is, not what it refers to that we recognize so much as Seurat's conception of it; (2) its size; (3) its color; (4) the technique employed; and (5) a unique character, a novelty—a feature that is *of* the painting, there to be seen by all of us, whether we like the effect achieved or not or whether we know where it comes from. These features are not taken in by everybody in this or any other specific order, yet they are bound to play a part in some fashion in anyone's perception of the painting.

When we undertake to analyze something, it is natural and sensible to proceed from what we can easily see or grasp in order to get, by way of what our background supplies as a key, to what we do not yet know. As a matter of convenience, then, we shall use as a starting point in analyzing the Seurat its subject-matter, *i.e.,* the illustrative aspect—surely a part of what all of us see. This aspect consists of what we recognize in the presentation of the subject, such as figures—one nude, two partially nude—depicted from three views in an interior, and other figures, dressed in nineteenth-century garments, in a landscape. Some viewers have claimed that the area of figures in landscape is a scene viewed through a picture window. If that were accurate, it would be even more odd an idea of subject-matter than it actually is; but, for those of us who are in the know and recognize the landscape scene as being one of Seurat's own paintings, our knowledge still does not account for what, here and now in "The Models," creates the sense of individuality that characterizes it, nor how that individuality contributes to the organic unity of the picture.

The combination of interior and exterior views has occurred in the traditions, as in Van Eyck (*e.g.,* Plate 42) and in Titian (*e.g.,* Plate 46), among others, and so has the combination of nude and non-nude figures, again as in Titian (*e.g.,* Plates 45 and 46) and in Manet (*e.g.,* Plate 44), whose version, incidentally, created a furor when it appeared, with Manet being rebuked on moral, not aesthetic, grounds by the art critics of his day. (To them, the Titian pastoral scene was perfectly acceptable, for its subject was supposed to be allegorical, while Manet's, they claimed, was "worldly.") And, in all of these, the clothed

and unclothed figures interact illustratively, as opposed to what happens in the Seurat, where the two subject ideas are presented as more or less separate scenes, with each having its own perspective—a manner of presentation which creates a distinctly dramatic effect and a certain oddness. Part of the analysis of the form, therefore, will have to consider Seurat's means of establishing a thread of continuity between the two scenes while retaining the striking note of drama.

So far, we have more or less simply itemized, taken an inventory of, the subject-matter. We may soon suspect that we are easily led to do so because of the way in which the units are rendered, that we, in fact, do so more easily with the Seurat than with many other paintings, such as the Renoir shown on Plate 48. Can we say that this happens because the Seurat has precisely defined units or that it is illustrative to a greater degree than is the Renoir? Not necessarily, and certainly not just for either of those factors. In de Chirico's "The Pirate" (Plate 2), the units are even more distinctly defined against each other than they are in the Seurat, as they are, too, in the work of Mondrian (*e.g.*, Plate 3) (wherein the illustrative is at the vanishing point), but we are by no means so tempted to make an inventory of the subject-matter contents of these. Or, if the Seurat is more illustrative than the Renoir, is that the reason for our being led to itemizing? Not at all. In Daumier (*e.g.*, Plate 51), where the primary emphasis is on the illustrative (even though the units tend to melt into each other, rather than to be individually distinct or completely identifiable), we are not enticed by the manner of presentation to dwell on an itemized account of the components of the subject-matter.

It is true that some people always, in any and all pictures, look for, get arrested on and, therefore, see only what of the subject they can recognize in the picture's subject-matter: it is the case of a person who, never outgrowing his mentality as a child, in effect asks, "What's this, Mama?" and is satisfied when he gets the answer. This is healthy for the child—so is pablum—but not for the adult: the mature mind asks more than "What is it?" Nevertheless, we and Seurat, neither of us babes in the woods, take in the painting much by way of each unit of the subject-matter because Seurat, in fact, identifies each unit, one after the other.

However, were we to get arrested on the act of recognizing and merely to continue to itemize and label all of those units, we would see next to nothing of the picture. In general, those who stop at recognition do so for one or the other of two reasons. First, they do not know what to look for or, possibly, do know but are mentally inert. Or, second, the painter himself has nothing else to say: he is inert, as far as art is concerned; he is a reporter, not an artist, and he uses his means only to say subject facts—this in contrast to the artist, who uses subject facts in his painting as only one of his means to say what color, etc., can say of broad human values by *its* characteristics. For, the artist's job is not to confirm what we know, but to reveal what he has discovered of an aesthetic nature about what we know, thus enriching it and giving us something new which we cannot know until we get that new thing from the artist's work.

Continuing our analysis of the Seurat, then, we move on to the color, and, here, too, we note that we are led to make an inventory, to itemize its particular occurrences. Unlike color in, say, Renoir, color in Seurat is, or, at least, gives the appearance of being, localized in shaped compartments. And, when we relate the color items to what we gathered previously about the subject facts, we find that our initial stock of findings is made more precise: it is not just a couch or a hat that we take note of, but a *red* couch, a *yellow* hat, and so forth.

We are still far from arriving at what makes up the picture's form, what gives it its significance. In fact, it could be said that, with the sort of inventory we have been taking, we have not seen any more of the picture than we would see of the word "art" by noticing the letters, "r," "t" and "a," that play a role in its identity: we have not, that is, seen the result of the specific relationships among the components that would make up the form of the word "art": "r," "t" and "a" could be related as "rat" or "tar," as well as "art," each of which relationships has its own form.

Or, to cast another light upon our inventory-taking approach to the Seurat, we could observe that, were we to stop there, our situation would not be unlike that of a kid who dismantles his father's watch: the kid does not, in the act of taking it apart, analyze the watch as a watchmaker, with his knowledge of the relationship of each cog to the others, can analyze it as he takes

it apart. Likewise, what we have so far noted of the subject-matter no more makes up the picture than does simply throwing together hydrogen and oxygen necessarily produce water. For this, certain proportions and certain conditions are required, and the result, the form water, is due as much to the specific relationships between the two constituents as to the specific nature of each of them. In addition, this result has a new, its own, form, with characteristics or properties that differ from those of each of the constituents. Correspondingly, in the Seurat, the figures, the line, the color, the technique, and so on, give rise to the form of the painting as a whole by the combined set of effects each thing has on the other, *i.e.,* by their reciprocal relationships.

The point we have been at some pains to establish is that an inventory of the constituents is one thing and is indispensable to an analysis of a form, but perceiving the results of the relationships among the constituents is what matters for understanding the form of any object or situation—be it the mechanical form of a watch, the chemical form of water, the aesthetic form of a painting, or any other. Now to make specific the importance of what relationships do in the case of the Seurat, we shall focus our attention on three particular subject units—the blue pot at the right, the shoe at the lower center and the blue hat at the left—to see what they are and do and the results of that with reference to the identity of the painting.

In an inventory of the matter of the three subject units, we find that all are fairly alike in color, modelling and type of boundary (clean cut). There are differences in the proportions of these elements, or the degree to which they are emphasized, as they define the units, as well as in their relationship to each other within the units and to the immediate picture context. For instance, the blue pot, a rounded volume with a straight neck and a handle that is set on a little stand at the far right, is more or less sandwiched between the white pot and its own highlight and plays a specific patterning part in its context not unlike that played by the dog in the context of the landscape. The shoe, with its not so dramatic highlight, is a pointed unit which closes up the space between the couch and the drapery and saves the central figure from falling through. The blue hat

has a "smoke stack" and a cottony orange "cloud" closely connected with it, with more of a one-piece effect in its modelling than is found in the pot or the shoe, and its brim moves in a direction opposite to that of the other hat, with which it establishes a drama of light and dark contrast and of color.

The company we keep has a lot to do with what we are. In the case of the pot, the shoe and the hat, each is a member of a dual partnership—hat-hat, shoe-shoe, pot-pot—in which, again, each time a specific relationship is established, thus giving, each time, a different character to the partnership. There is the drama of the pot-pot partnership, with its sandwich organization that makes the blue pot bulge forward. The shoe, in its turn, is part of a fanning motif, or theme of triangular areas, that recurs throughout the picture. The hats mesh with each other at the same time that they set each other off, as the brim of one links up with the crown of the other.

The hats in the Seurat offer one example of an oft-encountered use of headdresses in painting. Among any number of other examples are Cézanne's "Woman [Mme Cézanne] with Green Hat" (Plate 4), Renoir's "The Artist's Family" (Plate 7) and Matisse's "The Riffian" (Plate 8)—and it should be noted that we are on the way to perceiving what it is that an artist does if we can see the differences among these not in the style of hat each artist depicts, but in its picture significance, *i.e.*, in the broad human values expressed in terms of the qualities of the medium that each presented headdress embodies. In the case of the Cézanne, the hat, a platform topped by a rising column, is as if made of stone or metal—hard, solid, weighty, frozen—and provides, at the top of the picture area, a counterbalance to the lap and hands at the picture's lower portion, at the same time equilibrating the thrust and counter-thrust of the architectural components of the figure. The hat of the standing woman in the Renoir, made of lush colors, as of a garden of flowers, is a voluptuous volume that is echoed in the small tree at the side, in the houses, in the woman's blouse and skirt, in the child's bonnet; it is, in addition, one of a group of hats that includes the hat on the boy and the hat on the girl, all three of which, by their relationships to each other, emphasize the closed-in effect of the composition and the contrast of

axial planes created by the presentation of the figures.* In the Matisse, the headdress is essentially a set of more or less parallel, curvilinear, contrasting bands of color that are in keeping with and complete the theme of bands and stripes in the rest of the painting.

We could go on to consider, from the same point of view, the unique significance to the individual picture statement of the hat unit in any number of other paintings, such as Renoir's "Bathers" (Plate 52), his "Girl with Glove" (Plate 15), his "Henriot Family" (Plate 54), his "Girl with Hat" (Plate 5) and "Girl with Yellow Cape" (Plate 16) and "At the Café" (Plate 14), Cézanne's "The Gardener" (Plate 6) (where it is a band with a very different meaning from that of the band-hat in the Matisse) and "The Cardplayers" (Plate 47), the Flemish "Man" (Plate 13), Matisse's "Woman in Red Madras Headdress" (Plate 11), to name a few. One might be tempted to ask whether any of these hats is better than another—a question that corresponds to asking whether an egg is better than an apple. And the answer, we know, is that, for an omelet, it is better, but not for applesauce. That is, it is a matter of the purpose, of the occasion, and what that calls for, and then of the fittingness of the unit to that purpose and of teamwork with the context in which the purpose is served. Nor is the artist's purpose to record the kind of hat the figure wore, but to record the aesthetic character it acquired from the artist's imaginative perception of a situation in which the hat plays a part and to record it in terms of broad human values. In the case of Cézanne's "Woman [Mme Cézanne] with Green Hat" (Plate 4), the expression is of power, architectural equilibrium, and for that the hat Cézanne presents is an asset; the picture could not wear a better hat. Renoir's "The Artist's Family" (Plate 7) is, in contrast, a picture situation of fluidity, warmth, richness, and the hats, by what they are made of and do, work for that, fit that occasion; this picture, too, could not wear better hats. In Matisse's "The Riffian" (Plate 8), the volumes are subsidiary to the bang of exotic color drama

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*The evolution of this compositional idea of contrasting axial planes can be followed through its development in the traditions from the frontal presentation of subject units seen in the Byzantines (*e.g.*, Plate 10) to the drama of planes in Bellini (*e.g.*, Plate 58), Titian (*e.g.*, Plate 23), Rubens (*e.g.*, Plate 57), and in other Renoir's (*e.g.*, Plate 56).

that comes about by way of a pattern of shapes, and the hat pulls with the rest of the subject units for the good of that cause; thus could this picture also not wear a better hat. In other words, in each case, the hat fits the picture's occasion by fulfilling the requirements of the respective artist's purpose.

Let us return, now, to "The Models" for the next step in our analysis, which is to find Seurat's purpose, or plot. This we do not by consulting any outside source, even if that source be the artist's own words about his painting, but by looking at the work itself to see what the artist has done *in* his painting. With the Seurat, when we concentrate on what the picture directs our attention to, we see, as we have already noted, the clean-cut character of the units and now also that these units are set at relatively clean-cut intervals of space, even those units located in the distance. Further, we register an effect throughout the canvas of things having been set just where they are in just the position wanted—a feature that gives this painting an affinity to works from early traditions, such as to Uccello's "Niccolo Mauruzi da Tolentino at the Battle of San Romano" (Plate 61), in which the horses are set, as opposed to being in motion, and to some types of Egyptian sculpture, for example, the piece shown on Plate 40, wherein the figure has been practically snapped into place and frozen into its position. This is a manner of doing that we can contrast to the naturalness, spontaneity and casualness of, say, Renoir, to be seen not only in his figure paintings, but even in his still lifes (*e.g.*, Plate 49).

In the Seurat painting, each and every unit is treated in a similar fashion. Certainly, the three main subject units have struck a pose, but, then, so has everything on the canvas, not simply the figures, but also the ribbon (the folds of which strike a pose on their way down the blue hassock) at the center right, the mat, the glove, and so forth. Each unit in itself tends to be not caught in motion or in the act of getting itself into position, but static, born, as it were, just there, in that place, and just so, in that position—a condition very much the opposite of what we would find in Glackens, with his interest in and ability convincingly to convey poised activity, as in "Woman Lacing Her Shoe" (Plate 19), wherein the woman is portrayed in the *process* of putting on her shoe. As against the ease or poise or relaxed attitude of the Glackens, here in the Seurat the activity is sud-

denly arrested, not unlike a movie reel stopped in mid-frame, or a photographer's subject responding to the words, "Now, hold it": Seurat's figure at the right is about as far as could be from appearing to be engaged in the process of putting on her stocking.

Although the sense of action within the painting is static—just as the woman is not, as we noted, putting on her stocking, so are the figures in the landscape not walking, nor is the girl jumping rope, nor does the dog prance along, but is frozen in space—"The Models" as a whole is by no means static. The fact is, there are picture relationships that establish a dynamic picture movement and a great variety of picture activities. Our eye is led across and through the picture space, not as in Renoir's "Bathing Group" (Plate 53), where the eye continuously flows and glides along, but more as in Cézanne's "Nudes in Landscape" (Plate 60), where each unit is static and set, but leads on to the next, and all the units together are interconnected architectural parts of a larger architectural entity.

Seurat is like Cézanne with regard to the picture activity only up to a point. The main difference, of course, lies in the fact that Cézanne's units are massive, bulky, weighty; his color says power; his volumes are rooted, like immovable mountains, and, by their relationships, thump and pound with dynamic power in space and establish a very directly expressed drama of axial planes. In the Seurat, nothing thumps; there is no stress on bulk; a contrast of axial planes exists, but in a minor way; the figures, instead of being ruggedly hewn out of a block, are like delicately chiselled, dainty statuettes, light in weight, graceful in shape, having a luminosity, a brightness, as they gently punctuate, in dainty, clean-cut, almost-as-if-made-by-a-metronome sorts of "clicks," a comparatively clear, light-filled space.

With all this, the theme of the picture, or at least one aspect of it, begins to emerge, *i.e.,* the theme of a particular kind of interplay between units that *occupy* space and units *of* space. This theme involves a space composition distinguished by such characteristics as gentle, crisp delicacy, bright luminosity, clean-cutness, architectural stability, drama with order, a calm, tinkling, clicking rhythmic beat, a decorative pattern of contrasting color shapes, and, as will be brought out later, a suffusion of

essential characteristics of a number of traditions, here re-expressed in a new form.

By the same token, it does not take long, nor is it difficult, to see and follow the general compositional framework of this painting that knits things together and according to which the units were selected, used, organized, distributed and held. The key is to be found in the position, the placement and the relationships of the three main figures: they form an upright pyramid in the corner of the room, which, in its turn, partakes also of a pyramidal shape—this time a pyramid on its side, with its apex at the back (see Diagram Plate 62).

Indeed, triangular formations occur everywhere—in the hats, in the umbrellas, in the stove unit with the two pots at the right, in the folds of the ribbon, in the basket, in each of the figures, including the figures in the landscape, in the arrangements of the pictures on the wall, in the string on the bustle, in the floor, and so on. This theme avoids banality by the variety of the relationships established among the components of these triangular formations.

Also, and very much so, "The Models" avoids banality overall by the drama afforded by the window device (which is not at all a picture window) in the guise of the landscape scene. The inclusion of this device gives rise to a balance of disbalance in the painting as a whole that is closer in character to what happens in Mondrian's "Trafalgar Square" (Plate 3) than in Tintoretto's "A Venetian Senator" (Plate 9), involving, as it does, both a dramatic sort of variety and a definite sense of unity. There is, for instance, a variety between the two walls brought about by the fact that one is an interior and the other a landscape, with neither type of scene leading us to expect the other. Coexisting with this is an equally explicit sense of unity, in that each wall retains something of what the other leads us to expect by the way it is presented, as can be seen in the "wallness" of the landscape at the left—an effect due much to the frame and to the distortion of space within the area—being recapitulated in, at the same time that it balances, the pattern on the wall at the right.

Augmenting the sense of unity, there are a number of skewers that link the three main areas together, as well as a number of cube formations, the main one of which begins with the wall

and floor units and is completed by the spectator, who serves as the foreground unit (see Diagram Plate 63). Also acting as a unifying factor are the aforementioned fan formations and the triangles that occur throughout. These triangles are echoed even in the start of the trees at the top of the canvas, although those trees are primarily cylinders and originate their own rhythmic motif of similar cylindrical elements that carries through the frame, the standing nude, the pictures on the wall, the bustle, the white pot, the floor, and the dark and light patterning of the lawn. And, connecting all areas and imparting to them a set of characteristics that unites them in a common cause is the "umbrella" curve—a set, taut curve—found everywhere in the shapes and silhouettes of the subject units, that is quite different from the let-go movement of the curves in the work of such a painter as Botticelli (*e.g.,* Plate 20).

The drama and variety of contrasts that characterize the handling of the subject units and compositional motifs in "The Models" is also to be found in the treatment of its space. In the stove, the pots and the plate, there is a subtlety of space that recalls the space in Chardin (*e.g.,* Plate 17); and, in the foreground, the spatial arrangement has a clarity and a sense of order. On the wall at the right of the canvas, the space is of a relationship of planes close to each other. In the landscape-wall at the left, . . . is it Velásquez (*e.g.,* Plate 37)? The Orientals (*e.g.,* Plate 39)? It is a combination of both, as is also the case of Renoir's "Promenade" (Plate 18). Overall is a feeling of open air-iness, despite the fact that there are numerous things occupying a compact area of space: it is only a corner of a room, and yet see how many units are crowded into it, without, however, cluttering it up. Nor do the intervals between the units appear as just gaps, but are filled with a colorful luminosity—an effect characteristic of Seurat's work as a whole.

Georges Seurat, who was born in 1859 and died in 1891, was a contemporary of the principal Impressionists during their most active years. He studied drawing from the casts of the Beaux Arts School under Lehman, whose master had been Ingres, and made sketch copies of works of Holbein, Poussin, Ingres and Raphael. He discovered the work of Delacroix and became engrossed in Delacroix's color theory: Delacroix, in his

sketches, was the first to break up the single color of an area into subsidiary color dabs, doing so before the Impressionists did. Seurat began his painting career with Delacroix's palette and continued to use it for the remaining nine years of his short life.

As a painter, Seurat shared also the Impressionists' interest and worked with them, adopting their general method and principles and also adapting them, in the sense that he brought modifications into their ideas and practices which made for basic differences between his typical work and theirs. One important distinction between them, which is in evidence in "The Models," is that in Seurat's painting, the sunlight that pervades the picture is cooler, more as if it were moonlight than sunlight—a difference not unlike that between the coolness of Prendergast's canvasses (*e.g.,* Plate 73) and the warmth of Glackens' (*e.g.,* Plate 74). Indeed, in the traditions, we can follow a trend of cool light and warm light, for instance, the cool light of the Florentines as against the warm light of the Venetians—Botticelli (*e.g.,* Plate 21) in contrast to Titian (*e.g.,* Plate 23), with Veronese (*e.g.,* Plate 71) blending the two. Along with the Florentines in the category of cool light, we would place Poussin, the Dutch, Constable, Courbet, Corot, Sisley, Seurat, Cézanne and early Renoir; and, for warm light, in addition to the Venetians are Rubens, Claude, Turner, Delacroix, Pissarro and Renoir in his late work.

Another divergence from the Impressionists' manner of doing in the Seurat painting is Seurat's incorporation of large areas of light against other large areas that function as dark (*e.g.,* Plates 50, 64 and 65). Light in "The Models" focusses on the figures, the frame, the mats, while, throughout, there is a pattern of juxtaposed dark areas and light areas—the dark-light of the two pots, of the two hats, of the hassocks and of the head of the figure at the right and its halo and of her back and its dark aura. This treatment of light is not a feature of the Impressionists' paintings, with the exception of early Manet (*e.g.,* Plate 68), with its use of the black of the Spanish tradition by way of the work of Velásquez (*e.g.,* Plate 36).

A further modification of Impressionism made by Seurat in "The Models," as well as in his work in general, is his mottling of color by light and of light by color (*e.g.,* Plate 66). That is to

say, what was the shimmer of the Impressionists becomes in him a pervasive powdering of light and color: light sifts through every area, including the shadows.

This all-pervasive light is made another of the organizational factors in "The Models," helping to tie things together as it imparts a sense of atmosphere of light-sifted color or of color-sifted light that permeates every part of the picture area. In itself, the atmosphere varies in density, seemingly relatively clear, for instance, in the halo and denser in the "aura." Additionally, the light-sifted color penetrates the modelling of the picture units and causes the volumes to appear to be semi-porous, almost to breathe. The volumes, as a result, retain a sense of structural substance, yet convey also an air of being light in weight—an effect in contrast to the compactly firm, waxy volume of the flesh in Courbet (*e.g.*, Plate 32), for example, or the taut or tight volume of the flesh in Flemish painting (*e.g.*, Plate 12).

The sifting together of color and light that Seurat incorporated into the Impressionist tradition is Seurat's adaptation of the dappled surface and texture of the Venetian tradition as it occurs in the work of Titian (*e.g.*, Plate 23) and in Renoir's own adaptation (*e.g.*, Plate 53) of the Venetian ideas. Here it works, as we have already begun to indicate, to modify everything everywhere in the painting and to draw the different components together. The light-sifted color in the wall at the right, for instance, converts what would otherwise be a flat area into more or less convex volumes of floating atmosphere. Because of this, the wall meets the landscape half way on the basis of the presentation of volumes, just as the landscape meets the wall half way on the basis of having an effect of a plane patterned by silhouetted shapes—a treatment of varying elements not unlike that to be seen in Tintoretto's "A Venetian Senator" (Plate 9).

In addition, from the continuous powdering of color and light, there results in Seurat's "The Models" a luminous color suffusion that spreads through the entire picture area. This effect is traceable to the Impressionists' multicolorful shimmer and sparkle, as well as to the glow of the Venetians and, even further back, to the grayish haze of Masaccio (*e.g.*, Plate 26), though here it partakes of a lavender-blue tonality. Withal that

it is all-pervasive, however, never does the lavender-blue become monotonous, for injected into it are lively and enlivening accents of positive color in well marked off shapes. That manner of doing is not Impressionist or Venetian in origin, but stems from the Florentines (*e.g.,* Plate 27), as does also the aforementioned clarity of light that co-exists with the atmospheric sifting of color and light.

Color in "The Models" is, in general, bright, even exotic, and is used in contrasting, clean-cut shapes. Each shaped area seems to be made of a single color, a characteristic of the Florentine, rather than the Venetian, tradition. On a larger scale, each of the three main picture areas is dominated by a specific color—one by red, one by green and one by lavender-ivory—with, however, the predominant color of each area being echoed in the others: thus do we find the red of the floor area appearing, for instance, in the girl jumping rope, in the comb, in the prints on the wall and in the orange fruit; the green of the landscape can be discerned in the bustle and the stocking; lavender occurs all over the canvas as various shades of purple; and ivory is spread throughout and links the contrasting areas by belonging to both the suffusion of light and the patterning of light and dark. With this, there is no darkening of the color, no effect of umber or earthy tones or black, and nothing that gives the color a heaviness or that makes the atmosphere opaque. Rather, all the colors are clear and luminous.

The pervasive, vibrating atmosphere of color and light in this painting, an effect derived from the Impressionists, is based on the Impressionist divisionistic technique of breaking up the local color of an area into a number of small, contrasting, perceptible touches of the brush (*e.g.,* Plate 76). In the Impressionists, such touches are varied in shape and size; not so in Seurat. But the aims of Seurat and the Impressionists were nonetheless the same, namely, to apply to painting the discoveries in the field of optics being made by the physicists of the day—specifically with reference to the retinal fusion or mixing of primary color rays in the production of other tints and hues, as when a blue ray and a red one commingle in the eye to produce purple.

Also part of their borrowing from the new science was the principle of complementary colors, or what Chevreul called the

law of simultaneous contrast, which embodies the idea that more or less spectrally opposite colors, when juxtaposed, change, complement and intensify each other: in this wise does an orange placed next to a green make that orange redder and the green bluer. By this principle, too, similar colors juxtaposed are thought to be mutually detrimental, each causing the other to take on a grayish hue. And always along with the Impressionists' adaptations of principles from the science of optics was the intent to incorporate into their paintings the maximum of light.

In making use of these ideas, Seurat carried the theory over even to the very framing of his picture, often painting a border on the canvas that, as it moves around the perimeter, changes colors according to the color of the immediately adjacent picture areas (*e.g.,* Plates 28, 55, and 66). Of course, if this idea were followed to its logical conclusion, the entire world would ultimately be affected, but, since one has to stop somewhere, it might as well be at the edge of the canvas.*

Despite the fact that rays of color do not fuse in the same way that the pigments of different colors do, the Impressionists continued to profess their adherence to the laws of optics, though in practice they simply used whatever of the physicists' theory served their interest in colorfulness under sunlight; and, generally speaking, Seurat worked with them along that line. But Seurat also developed his own conception of the theory and, accordingly, modified the Impressionists' method in certain distinctive ways. For one thing, Seurat does not cause his touches to sweep into each other, to blend together. Instead, he departs from the Impressionist technique by reducing his dabs to the smallest possible dimension—dots—applied with the very point of the brush ("*point*" in French means "dot," hence the term "pointillism"), thereby bringing about a more immediate and thorough-going optical fusion or mixture than is to be found in the work of the Impressionists (cf., *e.g.,* Plates 66 and 76). Other artists, such as Cross (*e.g.,* Plate 67), Pissarro

*Not that all artists are willing to accept this limitation. Matisse, for one, after installing his murals on the wall in the main gallery at The Barnes Foundation, petitioned us to remove the freize and the two paintings, one of which was one of his own, that hung below (see Plate 81).

(*e.g.*, Plate 78) and Signac (*e.g.*, Plate 77), experimented with this technique with a variety of results, but Seurat's version makes a more successful use than theirs of the size of the touches, proportioning them to the size of the canvas so that, at a normal viewing distance, the optical merging of the dots occurs without interference from the pattern of the technique (see, for example, Plates 29, 30 and 31).*

About the technique there is also this to say, that dots of unvaried shape cannot be singly expressive, as shaped brush strokes can be: a dot cannot, as a stroke can, draw out a nostril or an anchor (cf., *e.g.*, Plates 24, 68, and 85 and Detail Plates 25, 69 and 72). Whatever the dot does, it does repeatedly and evenly throughout, with a weblike regularity, though in "The Models" this effect is varied here and there by a few stitches at the seams, so to speak, such as at the boundaries of the rolled stays hanging on the wall at the middle right. Seurat applied the dots either directly on the canvas or on an area underpainted with a uniform color that provides the color dominance for that area. In addition, he set them, or at least they appear to be set, in circular groupings and made them seem to ripple from one onto another, producing a dappling of surface and texture that vibrates inside the volumes and gives them a sense of airiness.

Yet another feature of the Impressionists that owes its origins to the science of optics is their treatment of light as emerging from within a volume and, therefore, as colorful. The physicist Helmholtz proposed that light reflected from a surface is white, while light reflected from the interior of a surface is colored by absorption, and that the farther light penetrates a surface, the deeper the color produced—as evidenced by the fact that velvet seems to have a darker coloring than satin of the same hue. In the Seurat there is a porousness, a sense that light penetrates the surface, which joins the airiness of space brought about by the vibrating dappling mentioned above and, with it, works towards an overall unity in the character of light penetration.

Seurat also differs from the Impressionists in that the Im-

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*Optical merging, in a sense, has also occurred in the work of the Mosaicists (*e.g.*, Plate 10) and, in another way, in the shimmering effect of early stained glass (*e.g.*, Plate 80).

pressionists, for all their touting of the theory of optics, did mix their colors on the pallette and, sometimes, on the canvas. Seurat, on the contrary, continued to maintain that, in order to achieve the greatest possible freshness, intensity and luminosity of color, one must start off and finish up with pure, unmixed pigments. Yet, with this, there is a unity in the effect of the color by the way the dots of unmixed pigment are used within the individual color areas: a dominantly red area, for instance, though containing a proportionally greater number of red dots, contains dots of other colors, of blue, green, etc., as well. And, conversely, a primarily blue area contains some red, etc., dots, so that all the contrasting color areas partake of each other's color, and all partake of the blue-lavender suffusion noted earlier.

The dots of pigment that make up the surface of the painting are not, however, merely a spilling of confetti organized for the achievement of a superficial decorativeness. Rather, with their color they are used as building materials, and they are also directed towards modifying another of the tenets of Impressionism. The Impressionists, because of their primary interest in color luminosity, sacrificed, often to the vanishing point, the individuality of shape, as, for instance, Monet did in "Sunrise" (Plate 79). In the same cause, solidity of volume also went overboard. Ever since then, it has been the ambition of many a painter to reinstate these casualties of Impressionist theory into the Impressionists' contribution. Success in one vein was realized by Renoir (*e.g.,* Plate 53) and Cézanne (*e.g.,* Plate 47) in their merging of the essentials of Impressionism with Venetian structural color. Seurat, too, succeeded in his way, specifically, by having light emerge from the inside of the volume and by stressing shape, intervals and structure by his architectural geometry.

In the Seurat, not only is there a linear framework or scaffolding, but each unit is distinctly shaped and located, with clear-cut linear boundaries, even though there is no continuous boundary line—an effect attained as a result of Seurat's extraordinary control of color on each side of the boundary. These linear boundaries have the character of a sensitive line, plastic, fluid and graceful along its length, delicately sharp, with no free flowing color running across it, as happens in Renoir (*e.g.,*

Plate 53). In its delicate clean-cutness, simplicity and sober gracefulness (it has no extra florishes), it represents a creative adaptation of the classic line such as is found in the paintings of Ingres (*e.g.,* Plate 22), whose work Seurat admired and, as an exercise, copied. Ingres himself derived this classic type of line from Botticelli (*e.g.,* Plate 70), who, in turn, derived it from the Greek tradition (*e.g.,* Plate 1), but, in Seurat's adaptation, it is less continuously fluid than in these predecessors. For Seurat's version is characterized by the relationship between a curve and an angle—the taut umbrella curve moves on and then abuptly stops at the angle—that makes for the previously noted set feeling expressed in the canvas. This taut-curve-with-abrupt-angle occurs as a pervasive feature of the painting, as, for example, in the head of the profiled figure and the neck and torso and in the bust and waist of the woman in the landscape and in her back and waist, and so on. It is, in actuality, much responsible for that set, posed and posing, arrested, held-it quality of the figures and objects and the feeling of their being set in a delicate, graceful, frozen stability.

Line in the Seurat represents also a new merging, with a new result, of the Venetian "no line" and the Impressionist interpenetrating touches. Here the touches do not interpenetrate, but, instead, are juxtaposed. The consequence of this manner of doing is not to produce a blurriness but a sharpness, Florentine in character, that is qualified by a delicate firmness and sensitivity. Plastically, this treatment of the linear element helps to transform an area into a volume, as it lends a one-piece effect to what it delineates, much in the way that happens in the work of some Florentines, such as Pollainolo (*e.g.,* Plate 33).

Let us now return to the unit of the blue hat that we discussed earlier in this article (pp. 8–9) to consider anew whether it fits the occasion, the plot, of the painting, and, if so, by what cause. Our response is that, yes, it does, and it does so by the characteristics of its cool, vibrating color, the relationships of its light and dark areas, its pyramidal shape, its clean-cut outline, the porousness of its substance, its drama of light and dark, its umbrella curve and angle. And it also does so by the part it plays in the overall context of light and dark drama, rhythmic punctuation of units everywhere, recurring umbrella curves and angles, and so forth. The hat is indeed a fitting member

of the family, related as a brother or sister, *i.e.,* by fundamental qualities it shares with the rest in reference to the theme they all are made to work for.

The analysis of the form of Seurat's "The Models," at least as far as we have taken it, confirms, among other things, the painting's novelty in the traditions, a novelty achieved through the selection, use and organization of all the material. The figures, hats, etc., that we see here, as well as the form as a whole, now should say more to us than they appeared to do at the start of this study. There were, as we know, figures and other subject units, pleasant or unpleasant, which became *these* figures, *these* units, with, here and now, *these* intermeshing, intersupporting characteristics enriching what we knew before in a way that we would not, could not know until we get it from what Seurat successfully reveals that he has discovered—namely, a novel, ingeniously integrated space composition, strongly marked by a sense of drama, odd contrasts, clean-cut order, calmness, delicacy, grace, with a gently crisp punctuating beat, an architectural construction of light-in-weight, though convincing, volumes in a luminous space filled with semi-hazy, colorful, luminous atmosphere.

Furthermore, the whole embodies the spirit, the essence, of a number of very varied traditions: there is the calm, cool detachment and spacious spaciousness of the Florentine Fra Angelico (*e.g.,* Plate 59); the architectural geometry of Piero della Francesca (*e.g.,* Plate 84), as well as his kind of color suffusion, in which one tonality dominates a multi-colorfulness; the compositional patterning of space and the distortions and the set feeling of Uccello (*e.g.,* Plate 61); the sheetlike setting of Velásquez (*e.g.,* Plate 37) and the Orientals (*e.g.,* Plate 41); the pronounced perspective and quick drop in scale of Raphael (*e.g.,* Plate 35); the circumambient haze and mystical feeling of Masaccio (*e.g.,* Plate 26); the colorfulness of the Venetians (*e.g.,* Plate 46); the luminosity of the Impressionists (*e.g,* Plate 76); the gentle grace and classic character of the linear element from the Greeks (*e.g.,* Plate 1), by way of the Florentines (*e.g.,* Plate 70) and Ingres (*e.g.,* Plate 34); the orderly sequence of volumes in recession of Poussin (*e.g.,* Plate 83); and the cool detachment of Puvis de Chavannes (*e.g.,* Plate 38). In addition, from the

Barbizon School—Courbet (*e.g.*, Plate 75) and Corot (*e.g.*, Plate 82)—Seurat carries over the feeling of the outdoors, and from Corot, in particular, comes the pattern of light and dark, adapted by Seurat to his own color theme. And from his contemporaries in France comes the essence of Impressionism (*e.g.*, Plate 43), the high-keyed, pervasively vibrating color and light and the lavender of their shadows, which in Seurat becomes a suffusion. And, just as, by knowing his sources in the traditions, we are able to see more of what Seurat did, does not seeing, each time, what Seurat did serve also to bring out, with more emphasis, the meaning of what his predecessors did with their means?

This Seurat also yields illustrative meanings attached to what we recognize as constituents of his subject as it was (figures posing in this and that position, landscape, etc.), now enriched in meaning and made specific by characteristics we associate with other things experienced elsewhere and transferred into these (characteristics of beadwork, needlepoint, confetti, a landscape in a snow storm, mosaics, ships at sea, and so on), all of which are part and parcel of what makes up this new entity or form.

Thus may we say that the form of "The Models" results from Seurat's imaginative, creative perception, co-ordinated with his knowledge of traditions, his technical ability, his interest, his perseverance, we might call it, his sustained effort.* It is further due to Seurat's ability to perceive relationships of means to end in his adapting to his intent the subject, the color, etc., and the multitude of features and methods of a great diversity of traditions.

In the final evaluation of the form of "The Models," we can allow ourselves a supercriticism, a picking at a nonessential aesthetic flaw. It is that the linear continuity of the two legs of the figure at the right is a bit too rigid, a bit wooden; true, the directional movement of the line is needed for the pyramidal grouping there, but we wish Seurat could have achieved that and not, in the process, have sacrificed the space relationships

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*Seurat is known to have spent a whole year on each one of his major pictures and two years on his "Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte" (Plate 55). He did very few large canvasses in his nine years of painting.

at the knee. Also to be regretted, in the same vein, is that the red in the foreground is not of a more subtly sensuous character, less obviously harsh and glaring as color and in its relationships to its color context; if this failing could be overcome with the red still retaining its exotic vividness and supporting strength at the base, the total color harmony would sustain more adequately the gentle delicacy of the space composition, and the color altogether would carry more conviction.

Now that we are equipped to perceive its form, our experience of this Seurat should be not only richer, but more to the point: we see it no longer as just a "striking" or "wonderful" painting (as we were told it was or think it must be because it hangs in The Barnes Foundation) or as just an "awful" painting (as we were told it was or think it must be because of our prejudices about The Barnes Foundation or the subject matter), but as an object, with objective features, *there, in* and *of* the painting, that make up its form and that make it novel and interesting. That is to say, we see it as the creative piece of art it is.

Art merit and individuality of any form in art have nothing to do with who likes or who dislikes the work under question or with anything anyone says about it that is not verifiable in the picture itself by anyone having an adequate, relevant background, trained in the use of the objective method of perception and able to relate the eye's report to what his background supplies as clues or hypotheses appropriate to the situation. We do not see paintings, in the real sense of the term, if we look at them through the artificial aura of wonderment—that should be reserved for our beloved or a "perfect" spring day—or an aura of "greatness" such as is created by self-termed critics or by the publicity hullabaloo of dealers, museums and auctioneers. Instead, we see them, insofar as our senses, our background, our intellectual, emotional and imaginative capacities allow us to, only when we look at what is there on the canvas itself.

The study of Seurat's "The Models" was an example of an analysis that revealed the identity of the form of a picture on the basis of specific relationships of specific constituents se-

lected, used and organized according to and for the sake of the overall intent or design. In our next article, we shall deal with form in its relationship to matter.

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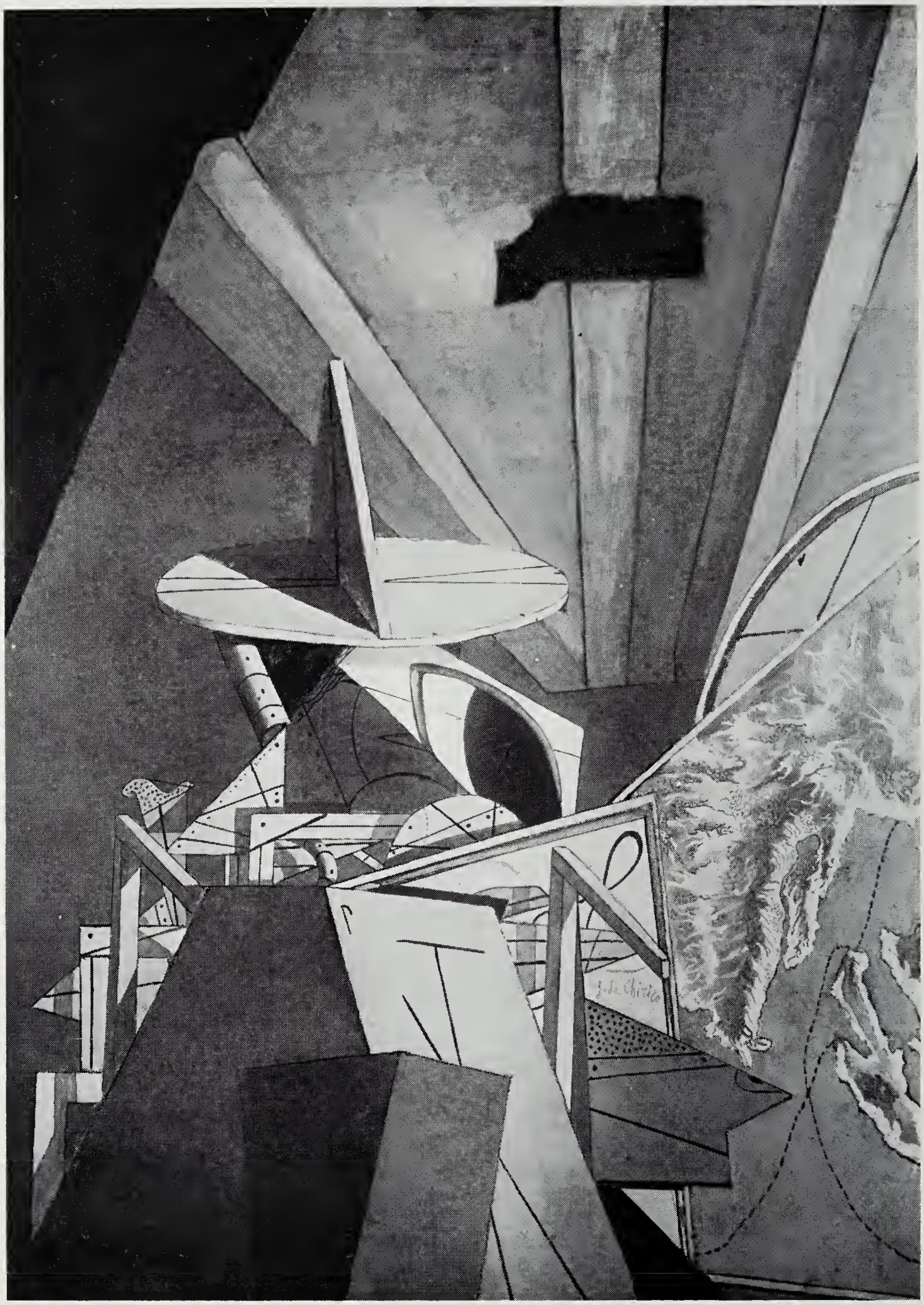
Praxiteles
(Possibly a Roman copy of the Greek original)

Venus Capitolini
(Negativo Archivio Fotografico Musei Capitolini, Rome)—Pages 21, 22

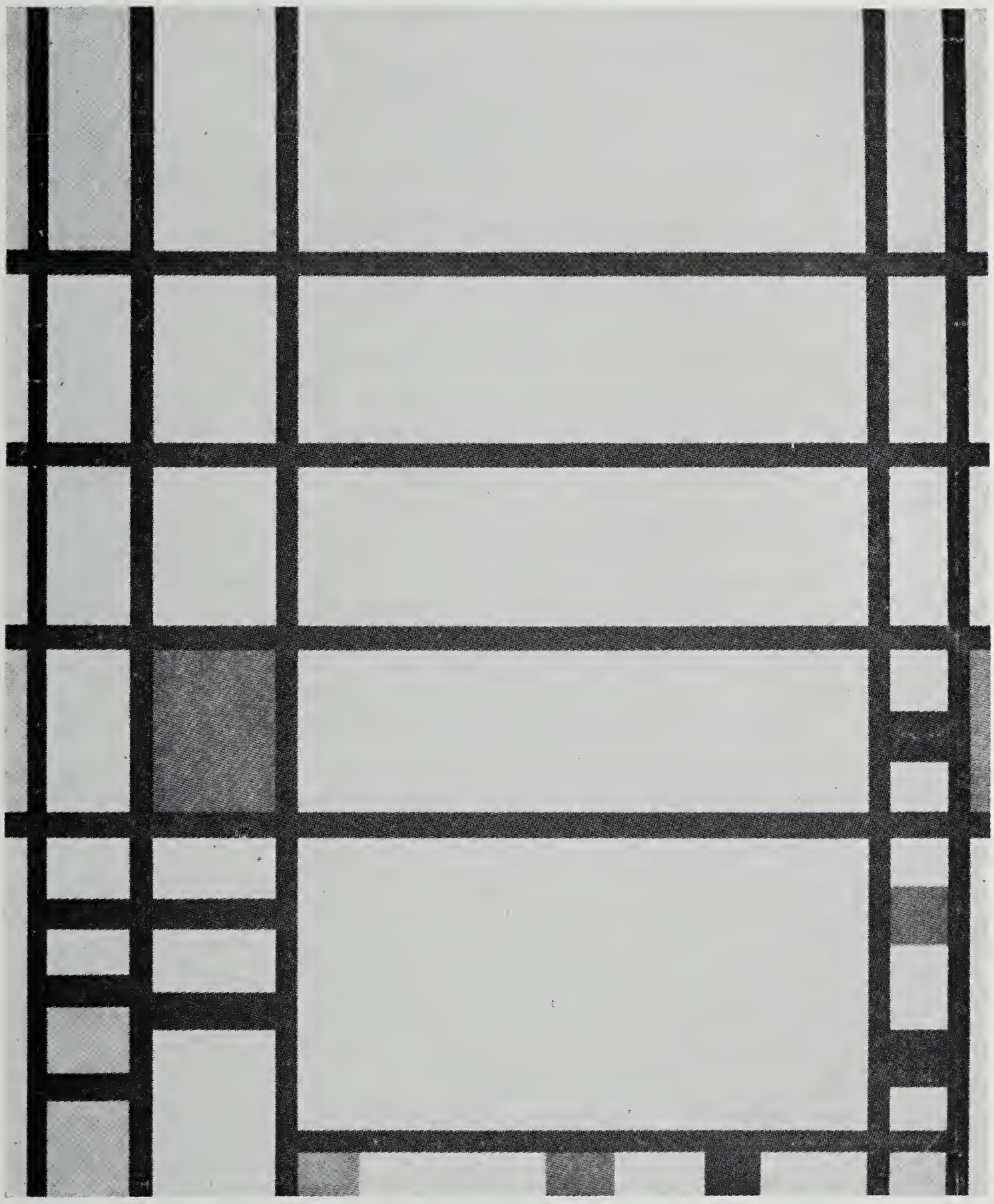
PLATE 2



De Chirico

The Pirate
—Page 6

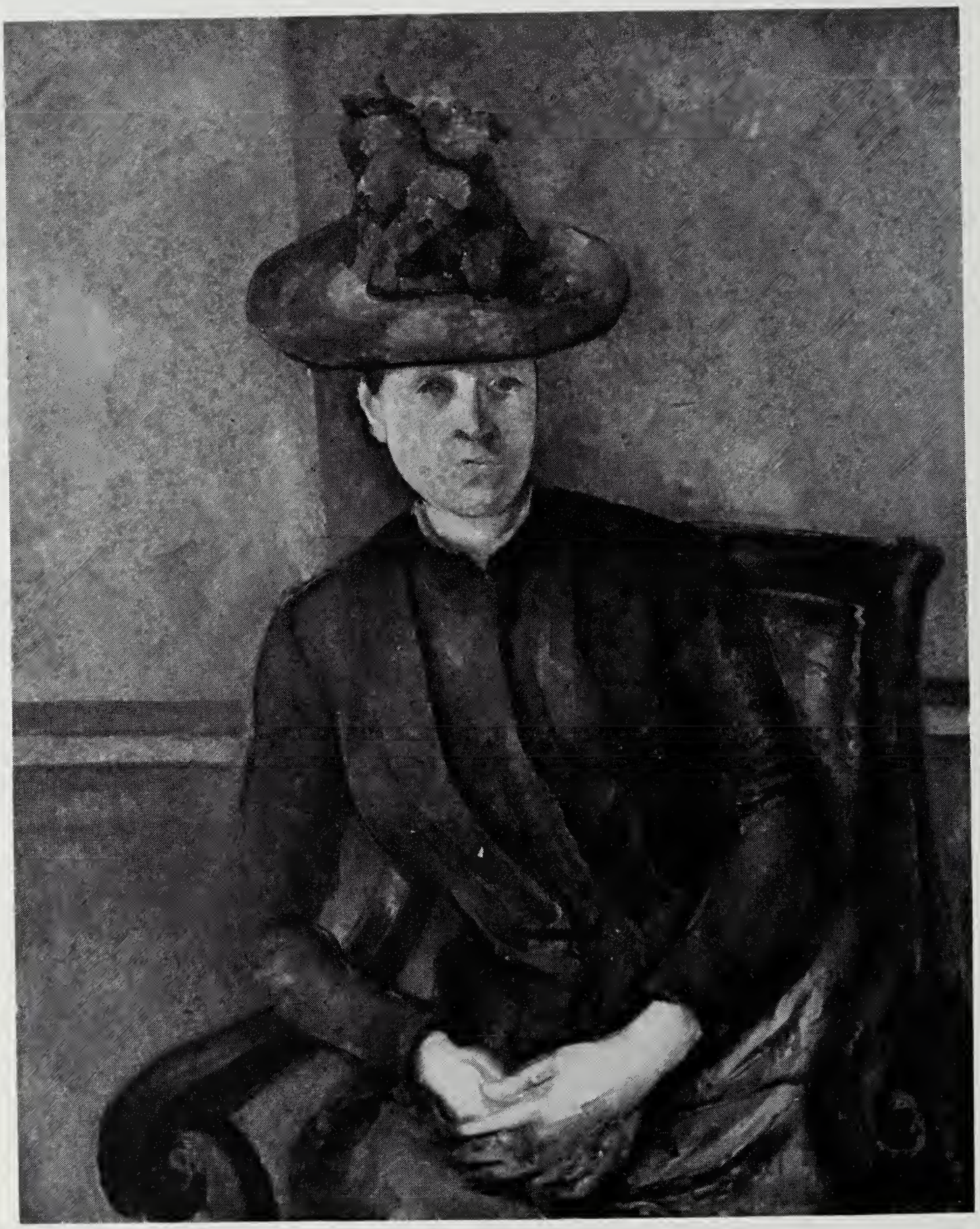
PLATE 3



Mondrian

Trafalgar Square
(Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. M. Burden.)—Pages 6, 13

PLATE 4



Cézanne

Woman [Mme Cézanne] with Green Hat
—Pages 9, 10–11

PLATE 5

Renoir

Girl with Hat
—Page 10

PLATE 6

Cézanne

The Gardener
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PLATE 7

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The Artist's Family
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PLATE 8

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The Riffian
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PLATE 9

Tintoretto

A Venetian Senator
—Pages 13, 16

PLATE 10

Byzantine Mosaic

Detail from *Queen Theodora and Her Retinue* (San Vitale, Ravenna—Photograph: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)—Pages 10 ftn, 19 ftn

PLATE 11

Matisse

Woman in Red Madras Headdress
—Page 10

PLATE 12

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Woman with Rosary
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PLATE 13

Flemish

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PLATE 14

Renoir

At the Café
—Page 10

PLATE 15

Renoir

Girl with Glove
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PLATE 16

Renoir

Girl with Yellow Cape
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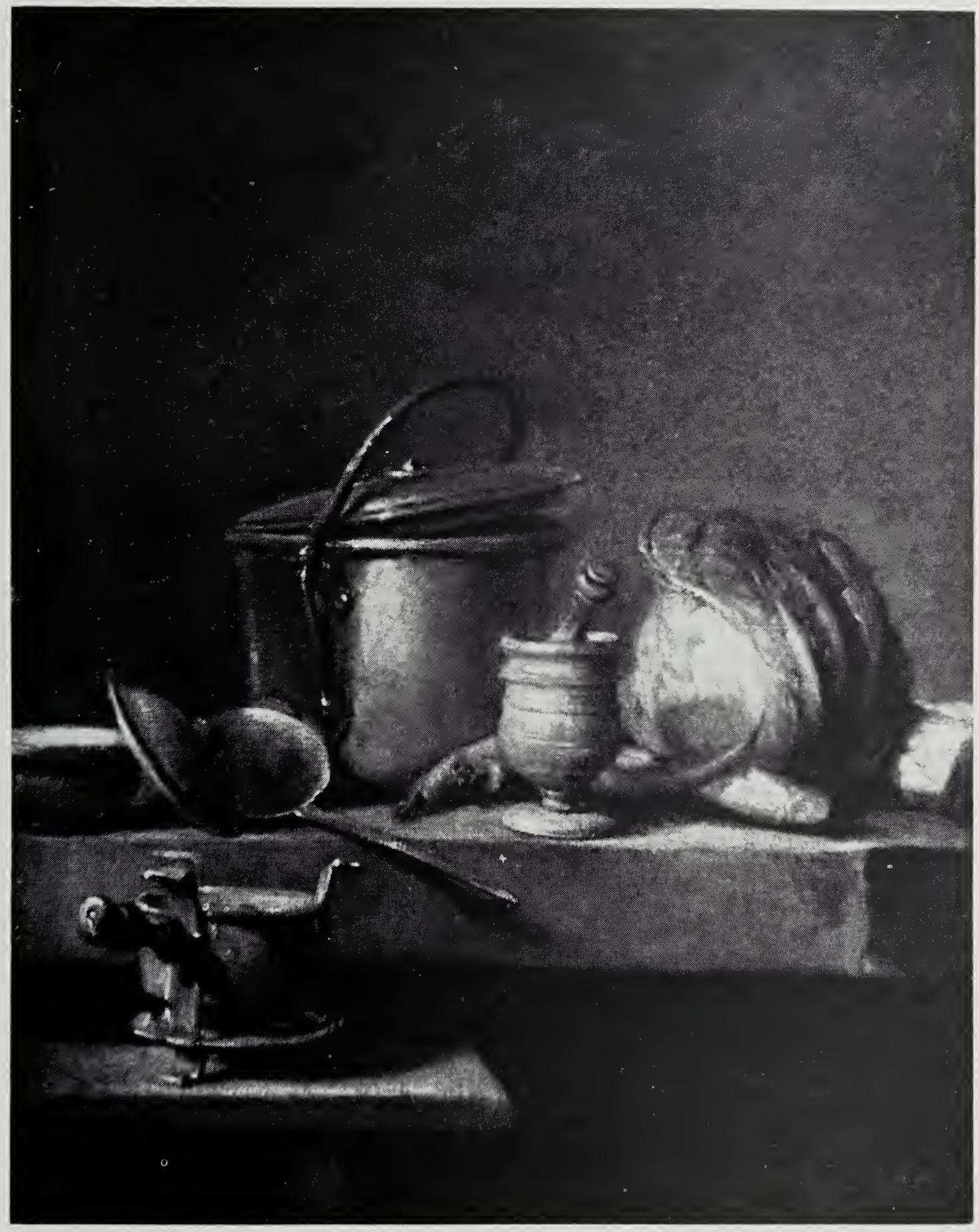
PLATE 17



Chardin

Still Life with Cabbage
—Page 14

PLATE 18

Renoir

Promenade
—Page 14

PLATE 19

Glackens

Woman Lacing Her Shoe
(Present ownership unknown)—Page 11

PLATE 20

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Head of Flora (Detail from *Primavera*)
(Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence—Photograph:
Alinari/Art Resource, New York)—Page 14

PLATE 21

Botticelli

The Madonna of the Eucharist
(Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston)—Page 15

Ingres

Valpinçon Bather
(Louvre, Paris—Photograph:
Giraudon/Art Resource, New York)—Page 21

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Man and Son
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PLATE 24

Manet

Portrait of a Girl
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PLATE 25

Manet

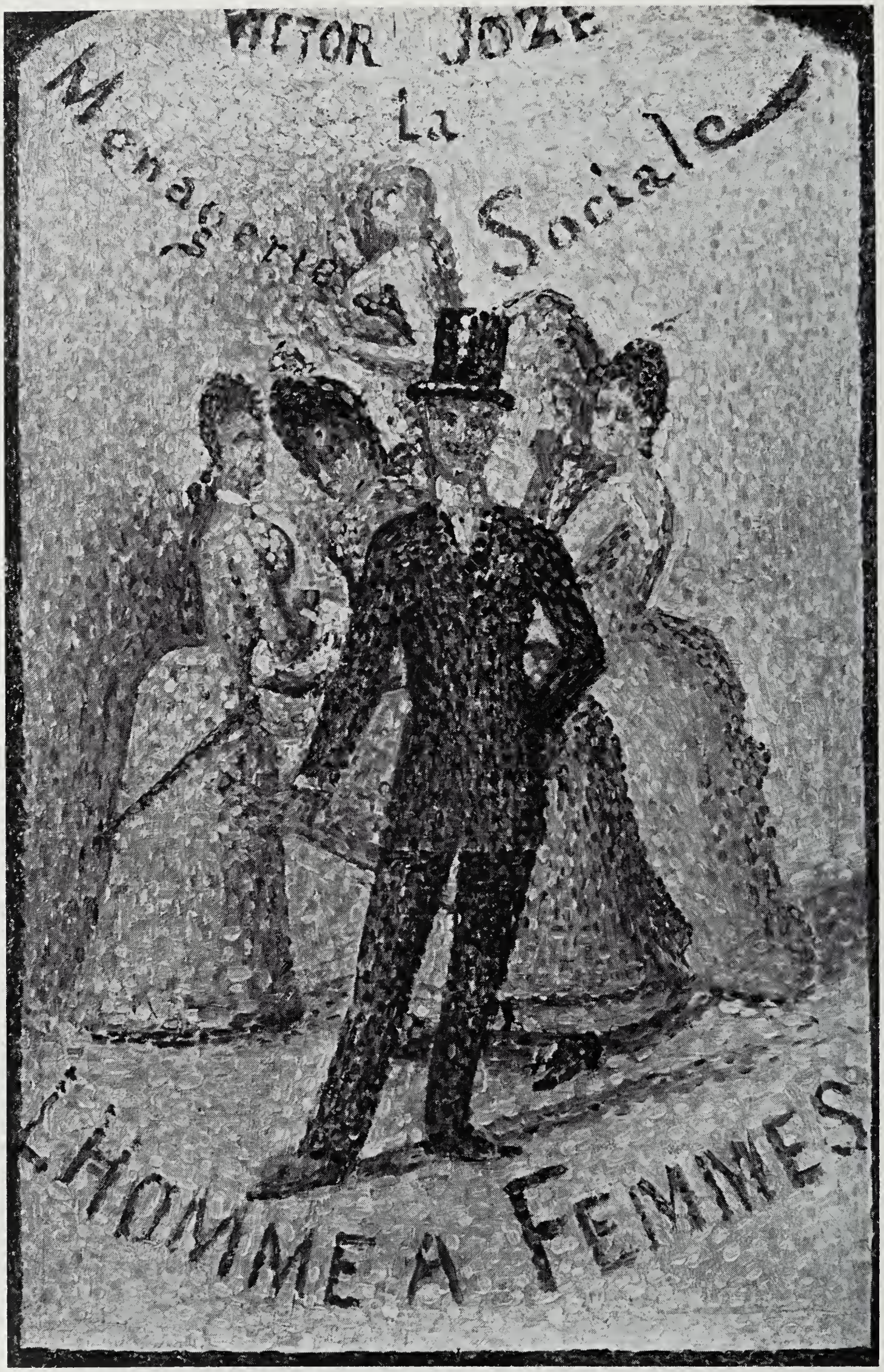
Detail from *Portrait of a Girl* (Plate 24)
—Page 19

Masaccio

St. Peter Healing the Sick with His Shadow
(Capella Brancacci Shiesa di Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence—Photograph: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)—Pages 16, 22

Ghirlandaio

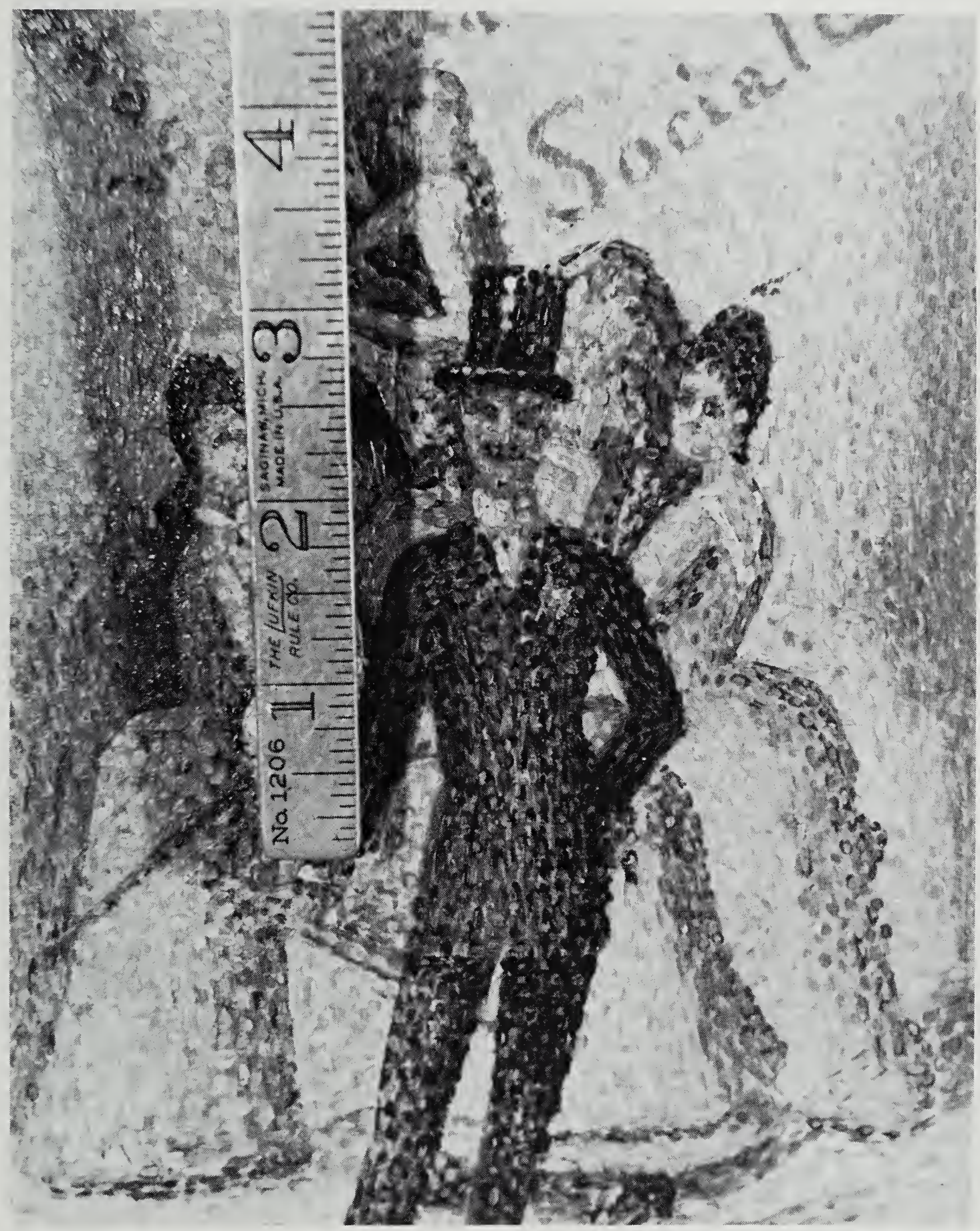
Francesco Sassetti and His Son Teodoro
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
The Jules Bache Collection, 1949. 49.7.7)—Page 17



Seurat

The Ladies' Man
—Pages 18, 19

PLATE 29



Seurat

Detail from *The Ladies' Man* (Plate 28)
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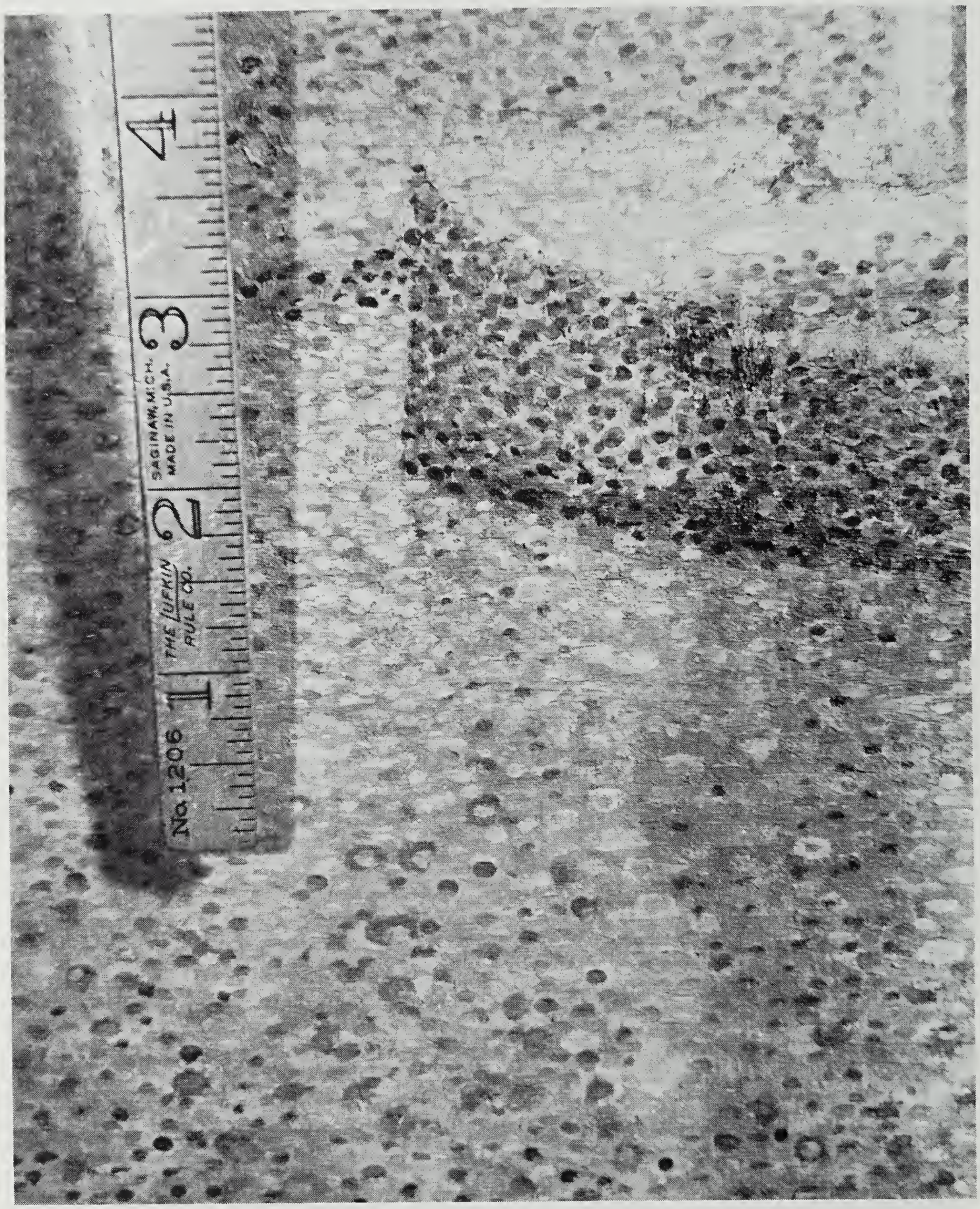
PLATE 30



Seurat

Detail from *Port of Honfleur* (Plate 66)
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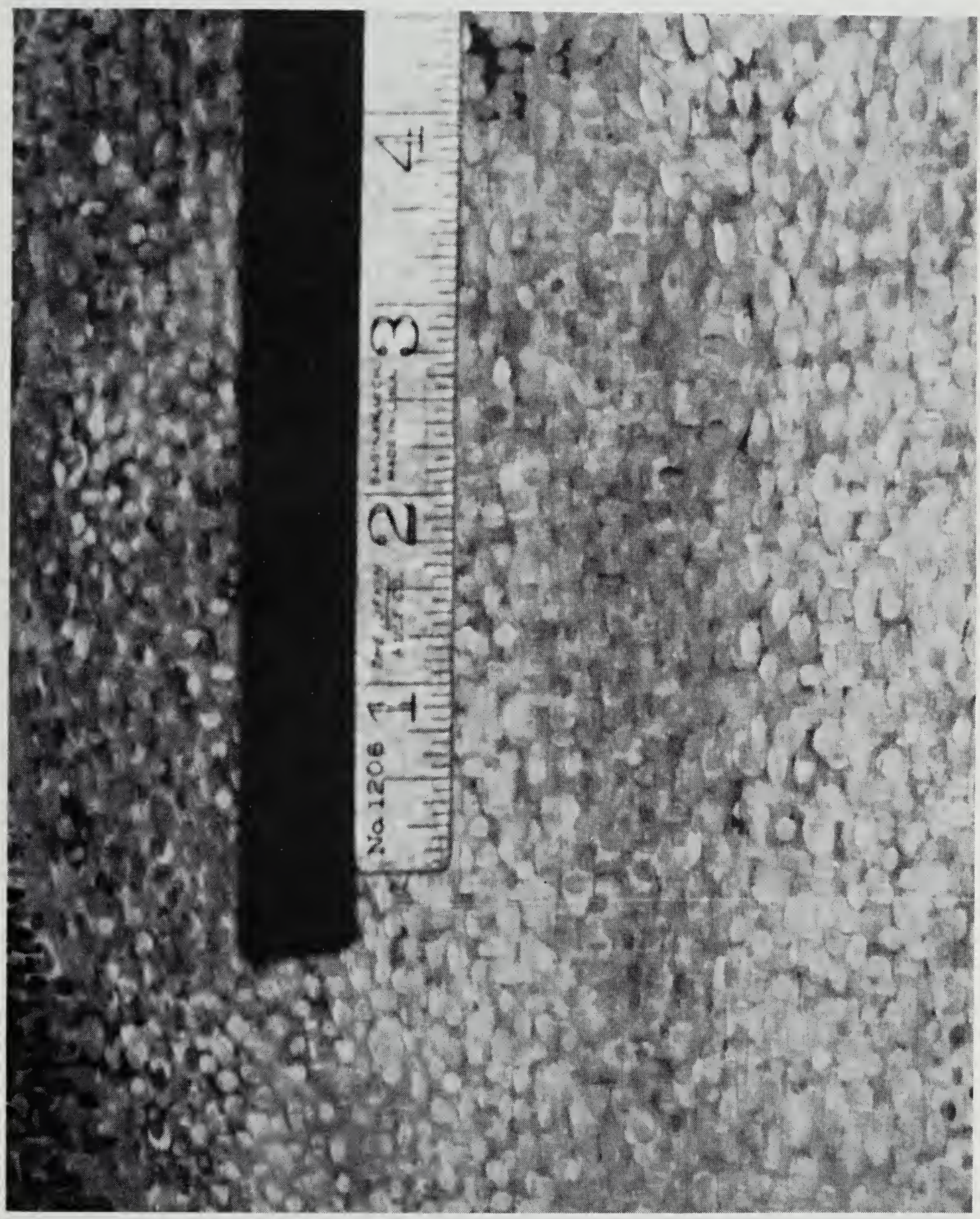
PLATE 31



Seurat

Detail from *The Models* (Plate 85)
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Woman with Doves
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Portrait of a Lady
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Portrait of Mme Rivière
(Louvre, Paris—Photograph:
Giraudon/Art Resource, New York)—Page 22

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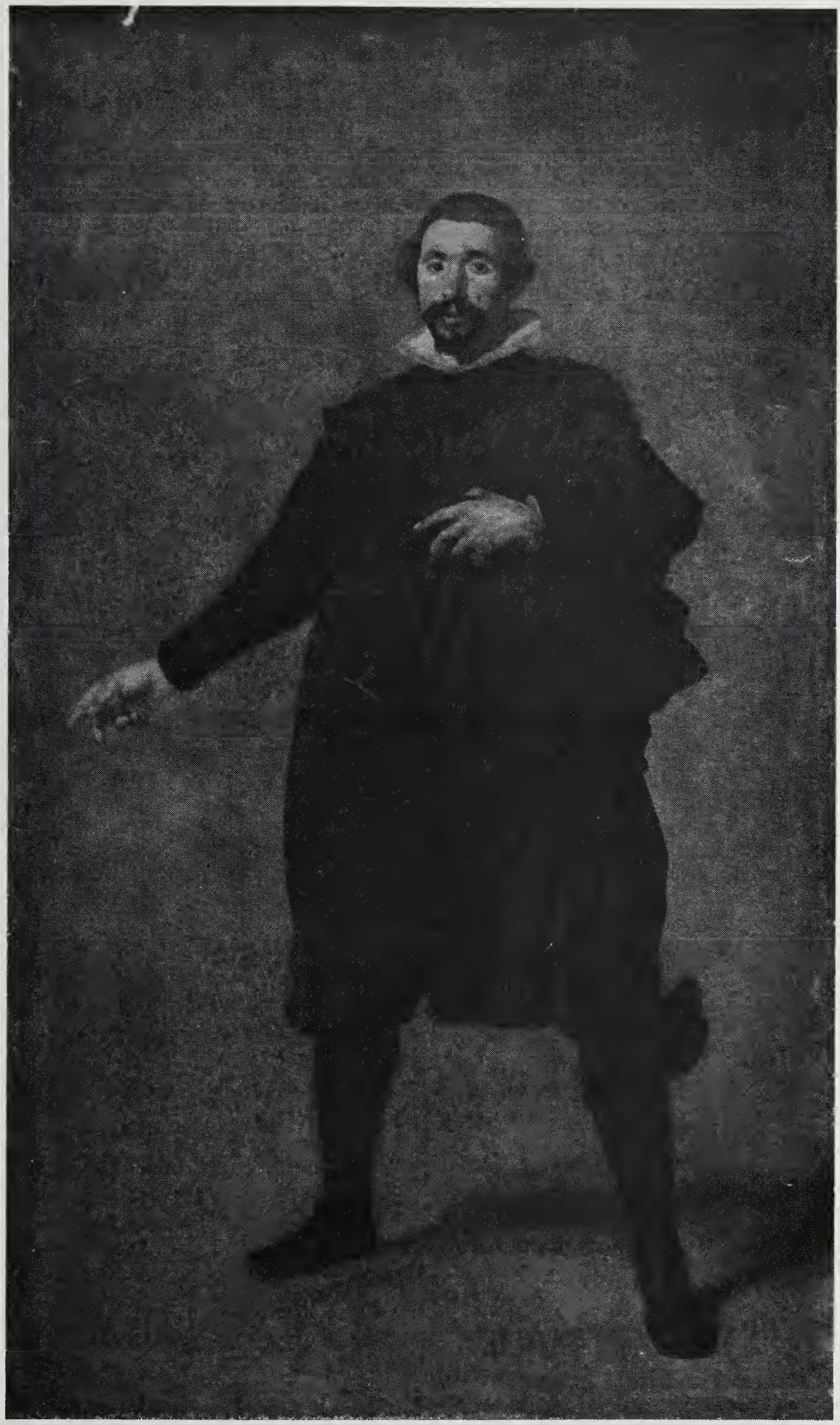
Marriage of the Virgin
(Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan—Photograph: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)—Page 22

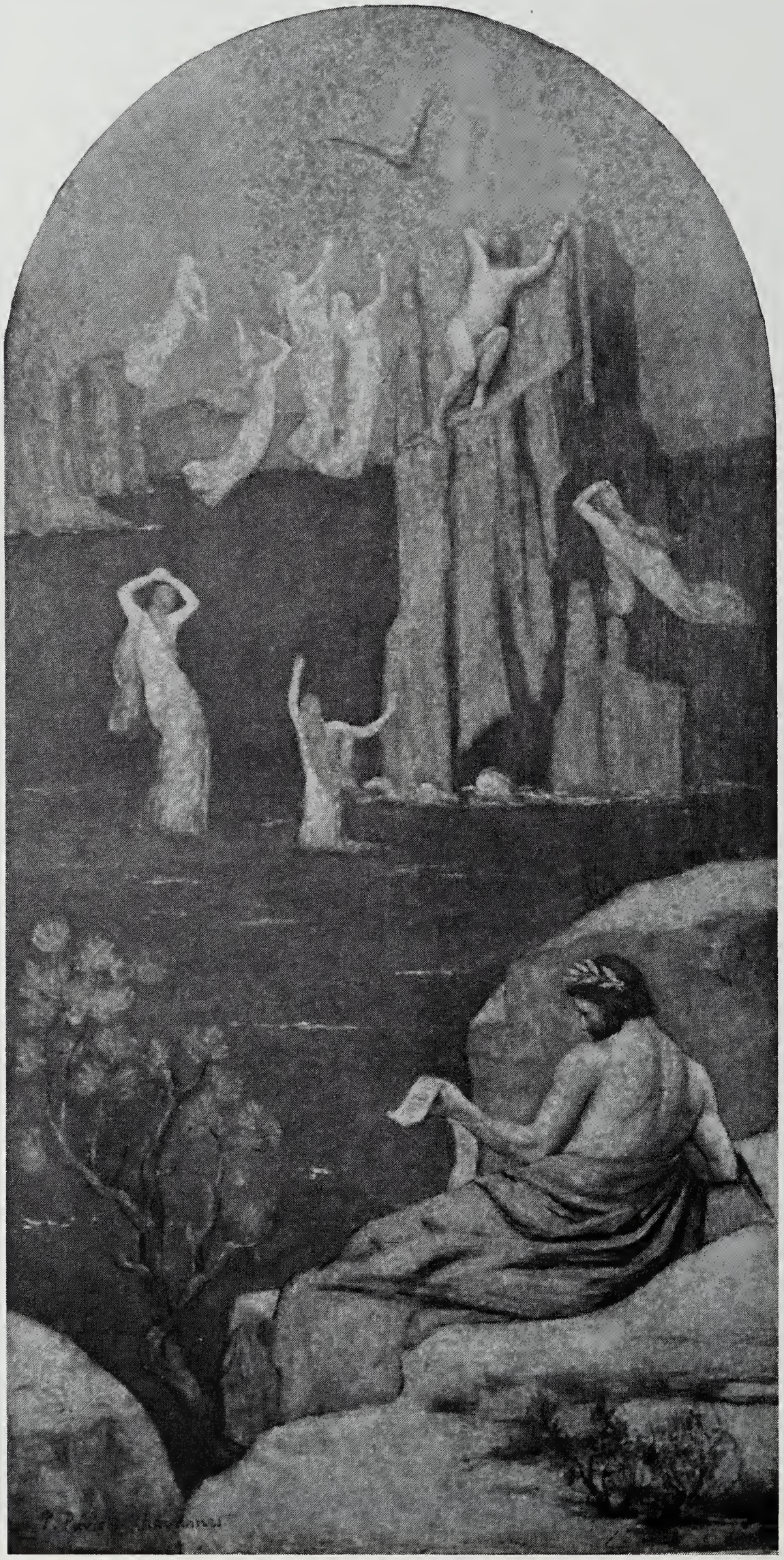
Velásquez *Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Philip IV*
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913. 14.40.639)—Page 15

PLATE 37



Velásquez

Portrait of a Buffoon of Philip IV
(Copyright © Museo del Prado, Madrid)—Pages 14, 22



Puvis de Chavannes

Prometheus
—Page 22

PLATE 39

Hindu-Persian

Interior with Figures
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PLATE 40

Egyptian
Ptolemaic Period

Figure
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Carnarvon Collection, Gift of Edward S. Harkness,
1926. 26.7.993)—Page 11

PLATE 41

Yoshi Tsuya

PLATE 42

Van Eyck

The Madonna Enthroned with the Chancellor Nicholas Rolin
(Louvre, Paris—Photograph:
Scala/Art Resource, New York)—Page 5

PLATE 43

Monet

Woman [Mme Monet] Embroidering
—Page 23

Manet

Luncheon on the Grass
(Musée d'Orsay, Paris—Photograph: Giraudon/Art Resource, New York)—Pages 5–6

Titian
(Formerly attributed to Giorgione
in collaboration with Titian)

Concert in the Open Air
(Louvre, Paris—Photograph:
Alinari/Art Resource, New York)—Pages 5–6

Titian

Venus and the Lute Player
(Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Munsey Fund, 1936.)—Pages 5–6, 22

Cézanne

Cardplayers
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Group of Bathers
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Renoir

Fruit and Candy Dish
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Seurat

Study for *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*
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Bathers
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Renoir

Bathing Group
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Renoir

Henriot Family
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Seurat

Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte
(The Art Institute of Chicago,
Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, 1926.224
© 1989 The Art Institute of Chicago. All Rights Reserved.)—Pages 18, 23 ftn

Renoir

The Writing Lesson
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Rubens

The Holy Family
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Bellini

Pietà with Virgin and St. John
(Pinacoteca de Brera, Milan—Photograph: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)–Page 10 ftn

Fra Angelico

The Annunciation
(San Marco Museum, Florence—Photograph: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)—Page 22

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Nudes in Landscape
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PLATE 61

Uccello

Niccolo Mauruzi da Tolentino at the Battle of San Romano
(Reproduced by Courtesy of the Trustees, The National Gallery, London)—Pages 11, 22

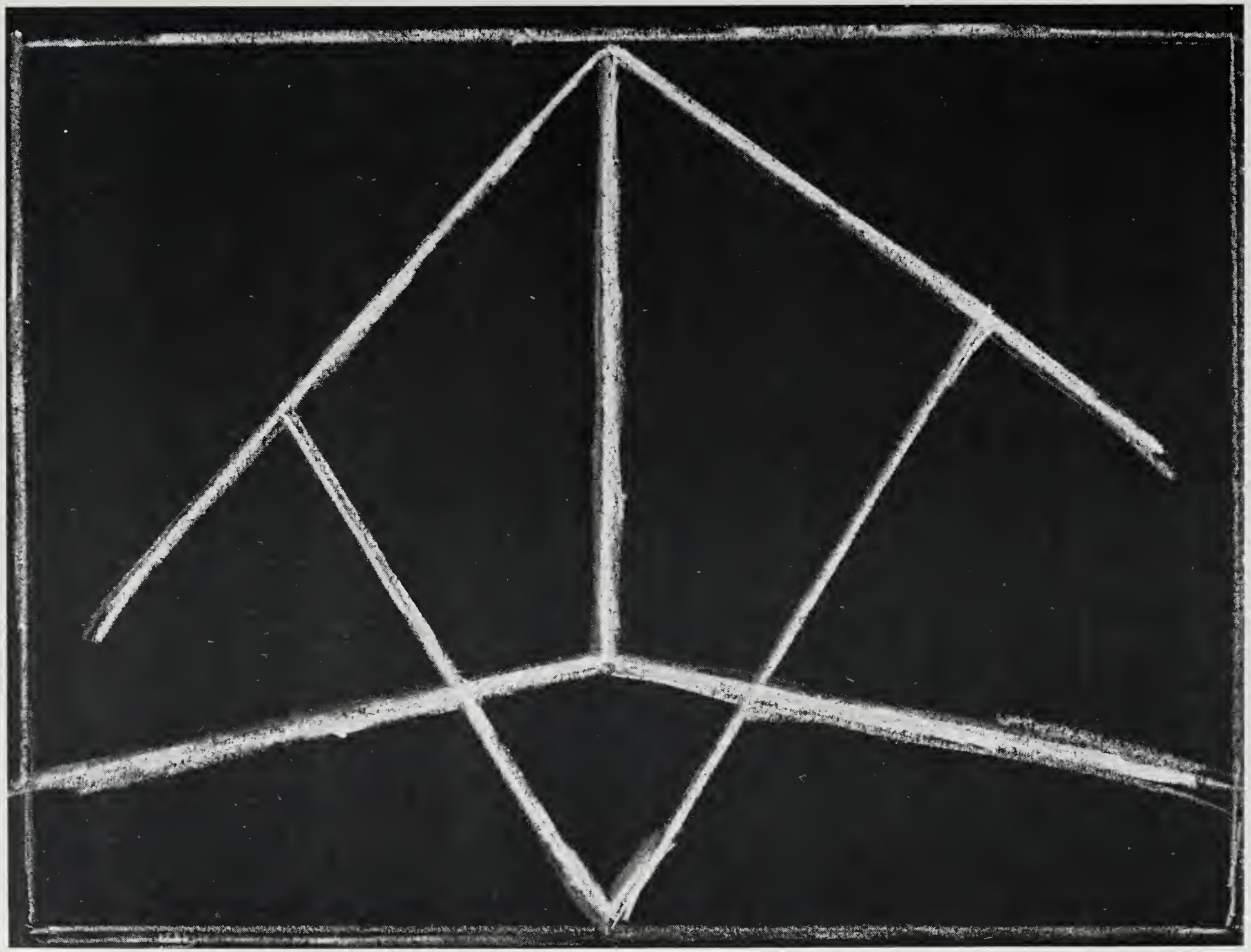


Diagram for Seurat's *The Models* (Plate 85)
—Page 13

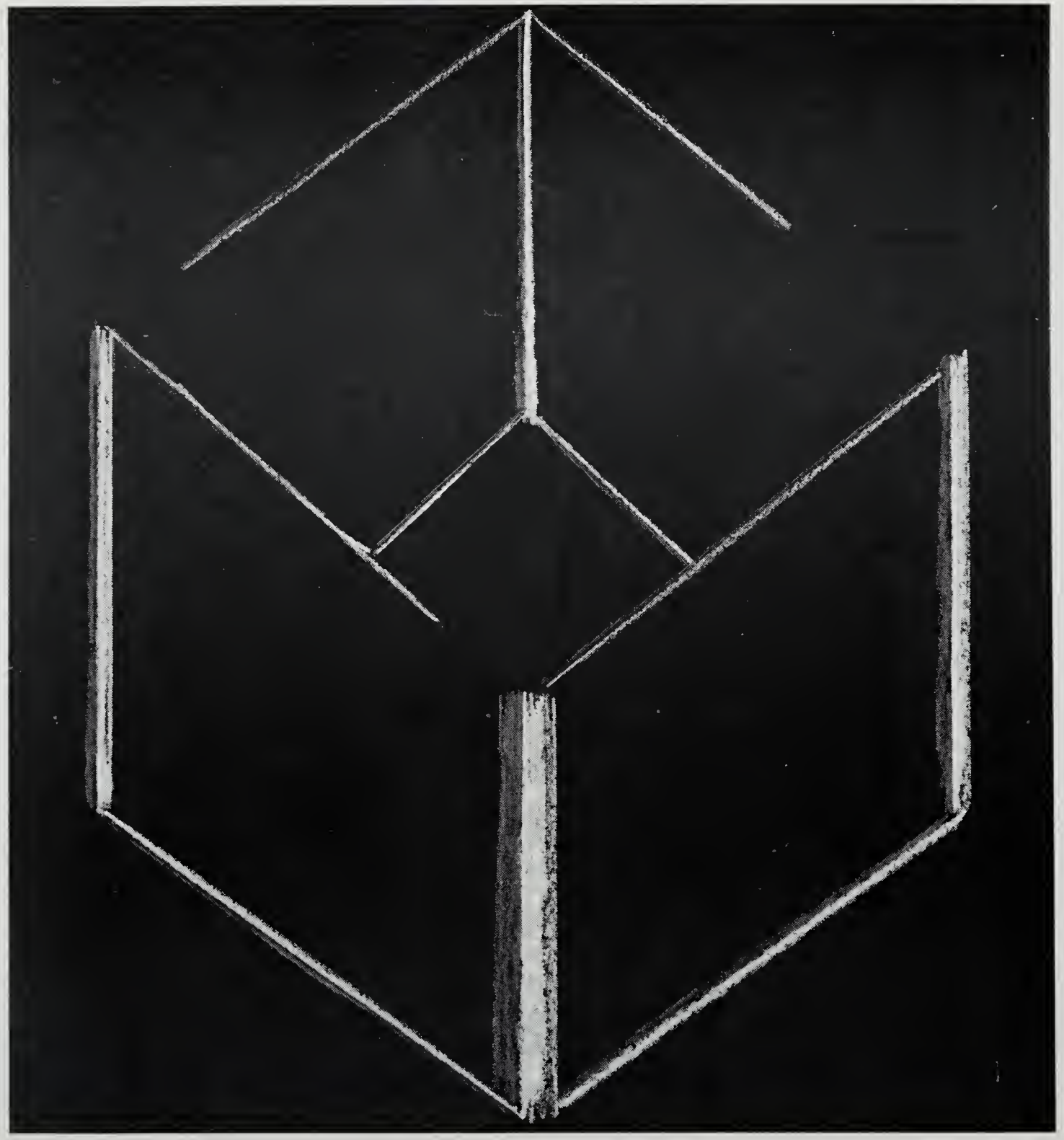
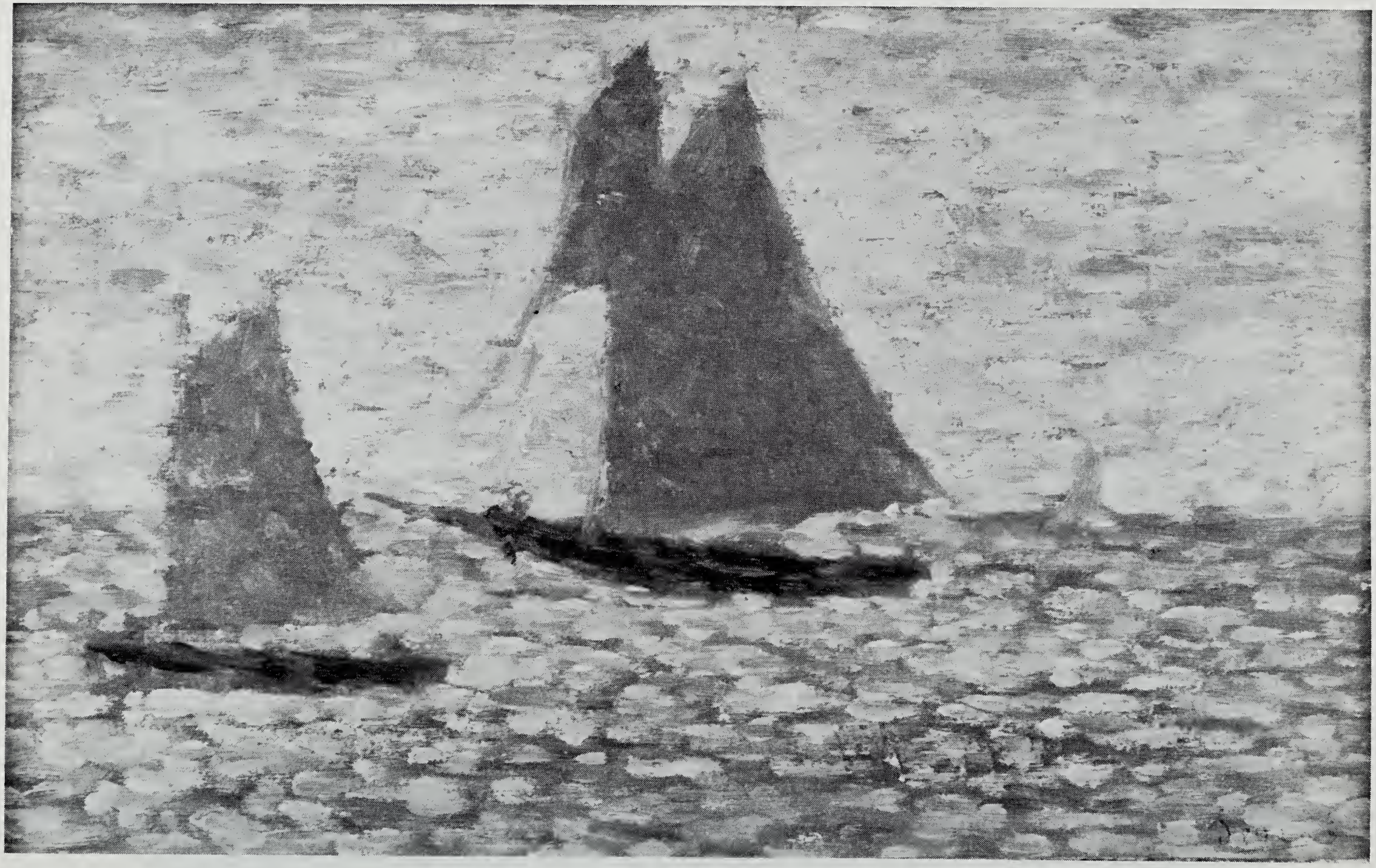


Diagram for Seurat's *The Models* (Plate 85)
—Pages 13–14

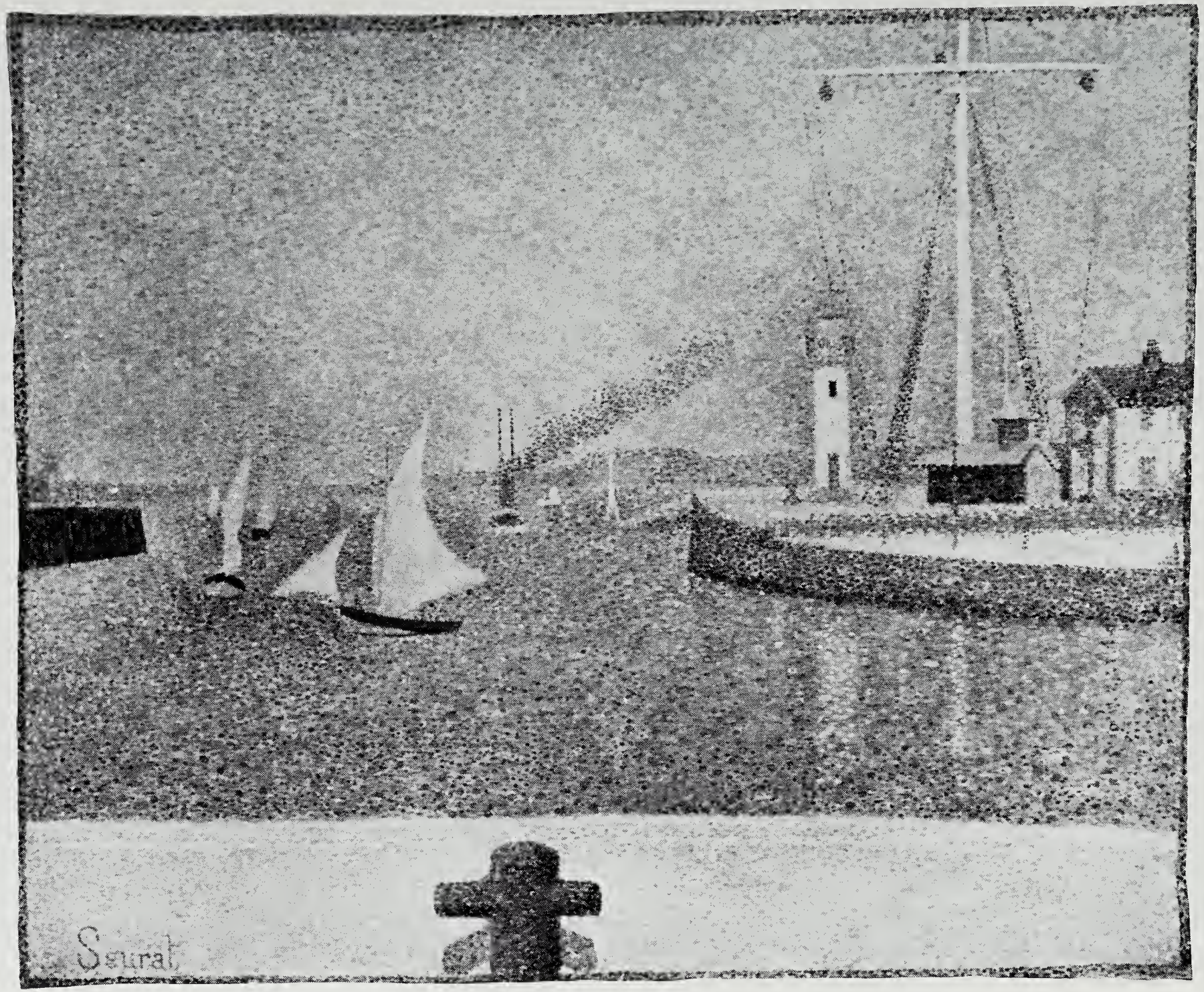
Seurat

Harbor of Grandcamp
—Page 15



Seurat

Sailboats
—Page 15



Seurat

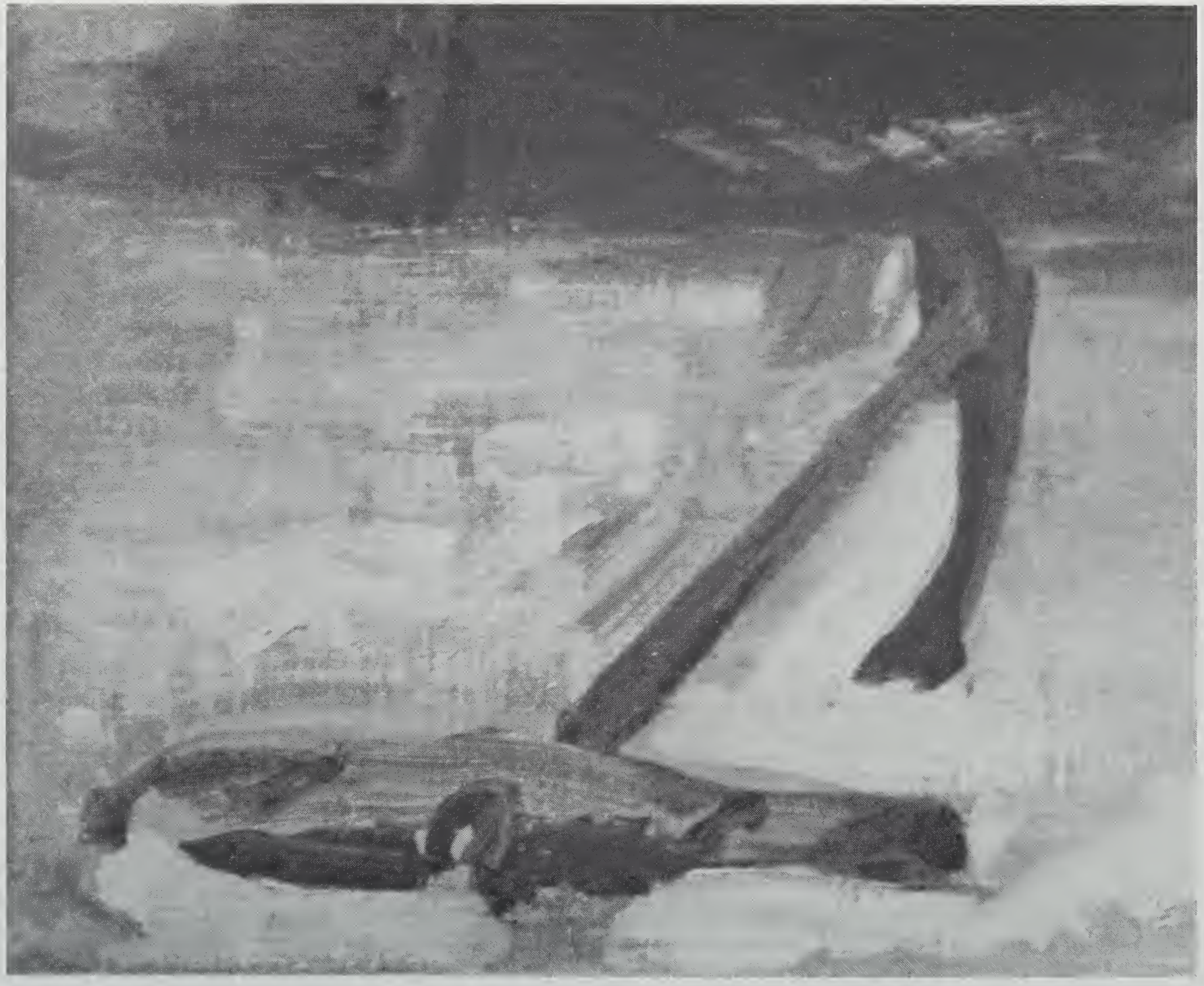
Port of Honfleur
—Pages 15, 18

Cross

Landscape with Two Women
—Page 18

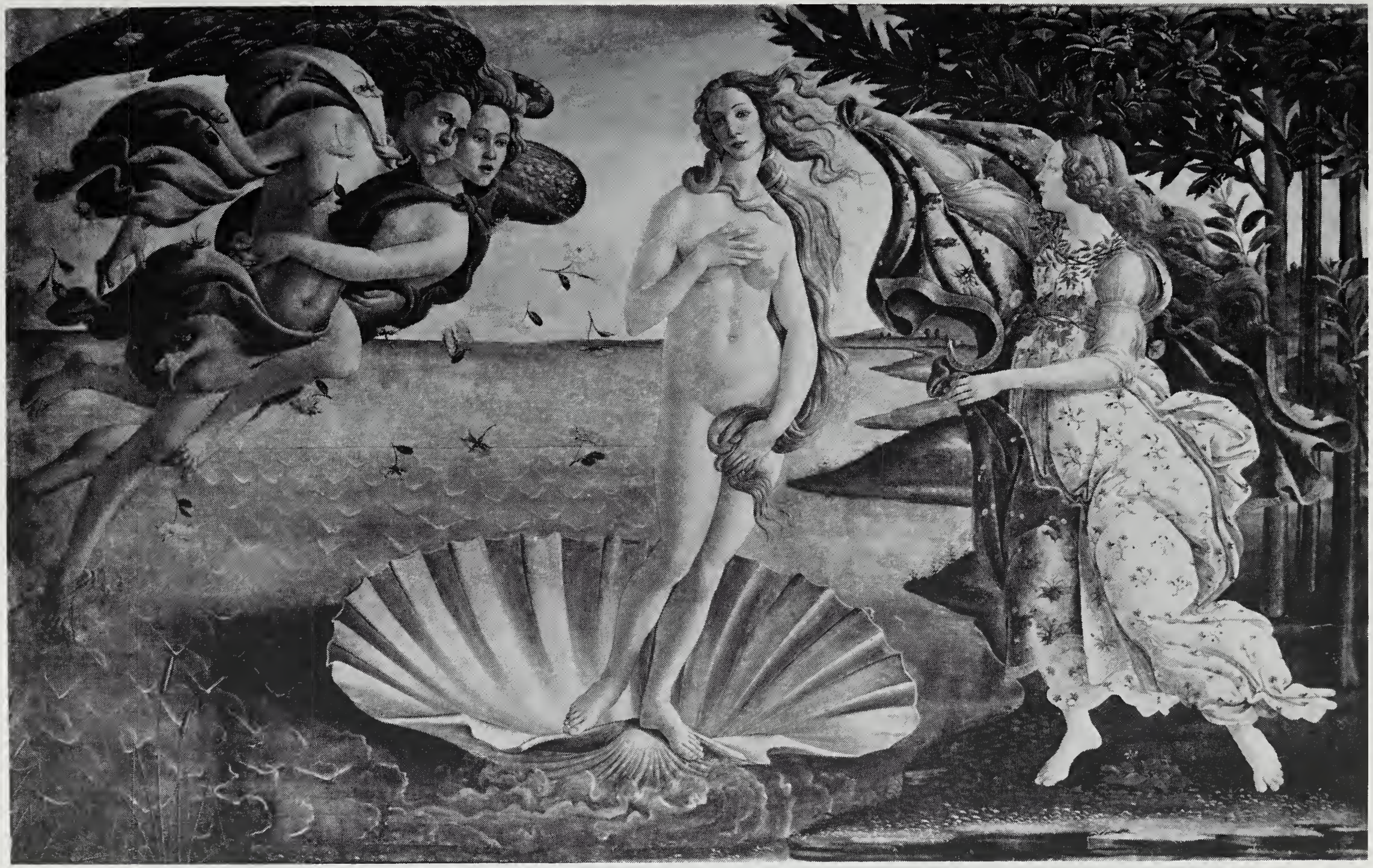
Manet

Men Tarring Boat
—Pages 15, 19



Manet

Detail from *Men Tarring Boat* (Plate 68)
—Page 19

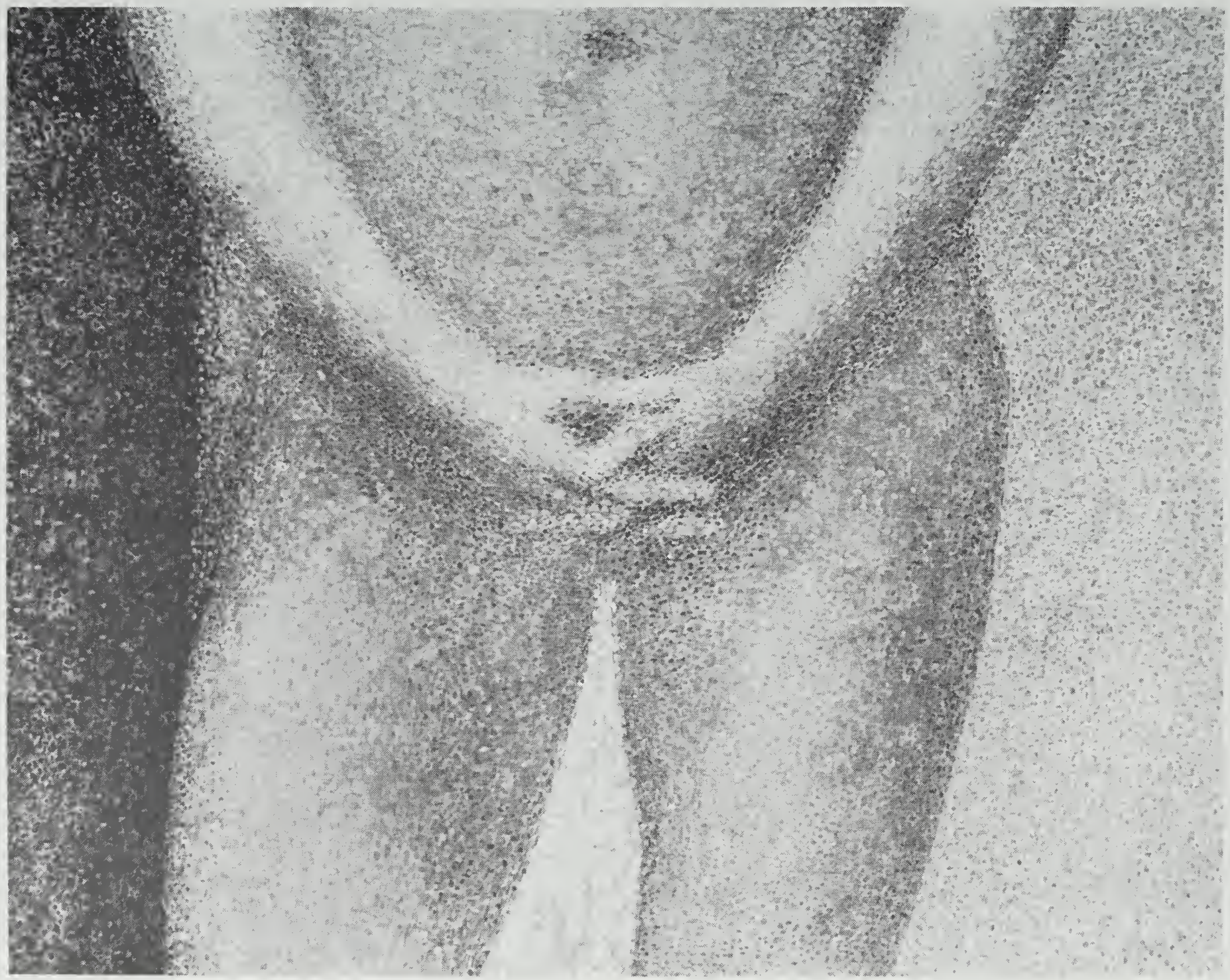


Botticelli

The Birth of Venus
(Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence—Photograph: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)—Pages 21, 22

Veronese

La Primavera
(Villa Maser, Treviso—Photograph: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)—Page 15



Seurat

Detail from *The Models* (Plate 85)
—Page 19

PLATE 73

Maurice Prendergast

Revere Beach
—Page 15

Glackens

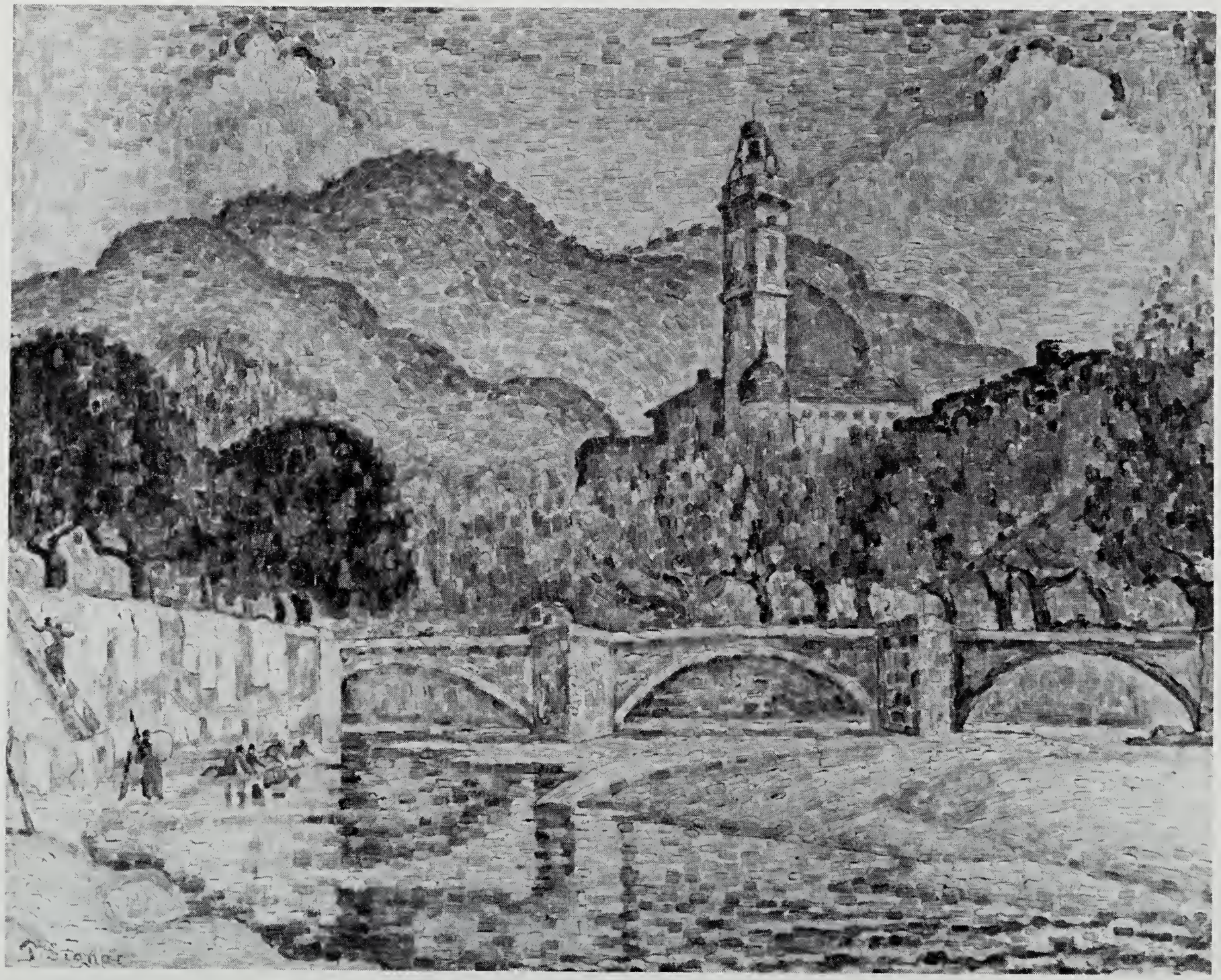
Belport
—Page 15

Courbet

La Bretonnierie Aux Confins De L'Indre et De La Vienne
(Present ownership unknown)—Page 23

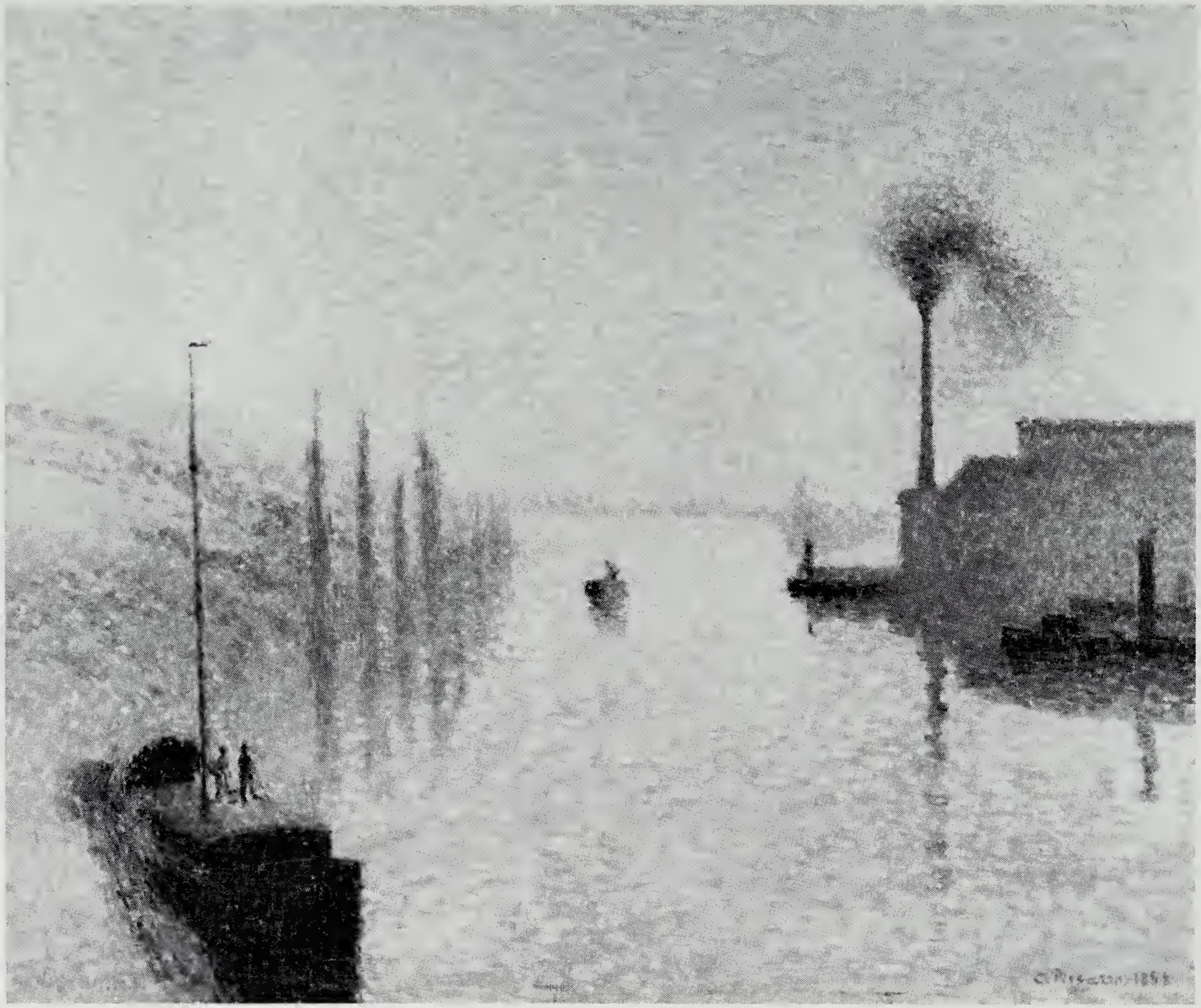
Sisley

River Scene with Ducks
—Pages 17, 18, 22



Paul Signac

Landscape
—Page 18

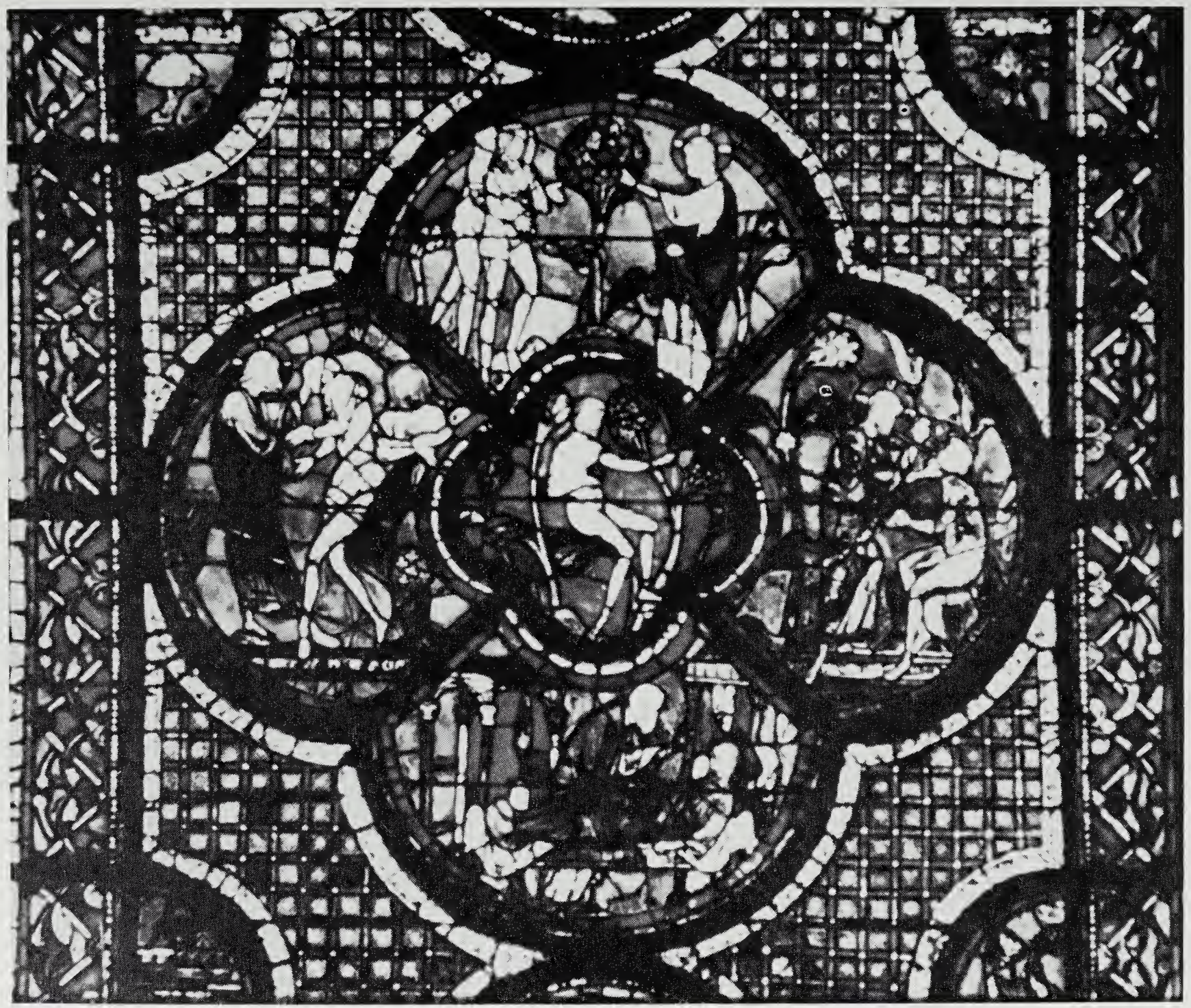


Camille Pissarro

L'ille de la Croix at Roxen, The Effect of Fog
(Philadelphia Museum of Art; John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia)—Page 18

Monet

Sunrise
(Marmottan Museum, Paris—Photograph: Giraudon/Art Resource, New York)—Page 20



Gothic Stained Glass

Creation of Adam and Eve
(Chartres Cathedral)—Page 19 ftn

Wall Display
at the Barnes Foundation

Room I (wall with Matisse Murals)
—Page 18 ftn

Corot

Italian Landscape
—Page 23

Poussin

Funeral of Phocion
(Louvre—Photograph: Musées Nationaux, Paris)—Page 22

Piero della Francesca

The Queen of Sheba Meeting King Solomon (Fragment)
(San Francesco, Arezzo—Photograph: Scala/Art Resource, New York)—Page 22

Seurat

The Models
—Pages 3–5, 6–9, 11–14, 15–17, 18–24

Violette de Mazia:

A Remembrance in Gratitude

by Esther Van Sant*

Violette de Mazia was born in Paris in 1899. Her formal education included attendance at St. Gilles' Ecole Communale and Ecole Superieure Gatti in Brussels and, in London, at St. John's Wood Priory House School and Hampstead Conservatory, where she studied painting in the studio of Robert Christie. Also in England, she studied art at the Camden School of Art and attended classes at the London Polytechnic School.

Miss de Mazia first came to the United States in the early 1920s. A few years later, she participated in classes in the philosophy and appreciation of art offered by the University of Pennsylvania and conducted by Dr. Thomas Munro at The Barnes Foundation. Soon after, she was given a teaching position at the Foundation by its founder, Dr. Albert C. Barnes, for which she organized and developed an original program of study that became what is today the most significant approach to the understanding of art offered at any educational institution. She became a naturalized American citizen in 1934.

In addition to teaching, Miss de Mazia, together with Dr. Barnes, authored a number of books unique in the field of art scholarship for their analytical depth and substance. These are *The French Primitives and Their Forms, The Art of Renoir, The Art of Henri Matisse,* and *The Art of Cézanne.* She also wrote a number of essays and articles, some of which can be found, along with essays by Dr. Barnes and John Dewey, among others, in the book *Art and Education.* In 1970, using as her model the Foundation's *Journal of The Barnes Foundation* of the 1920s, she ini-

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*Director of Education of The Barnes Foundation Art Department.

tiated publication of *The Barnes Foundation Journal of the Art Department,* serving as both editor and a contributing author for the eight years of its existence. In 1979, she began publication of a journal of her own design, entitled *Vistas*, which she continued to work on until the time of her death.

Miss de Mazia was named a Trustee of The Barnes Foundation in 1935 and was appointed Vice President of the board of Trustees in the 1960s. She became Director of Education of the Foundation's Art Department in 1950, with its vast administrative burdens, succeeding John Dewey to that position. And throughout her more than sixty-year association with the Foundation, she fulfilled the requirements of her most demanding role, that as a teacher of the first-year course, as well as handling a demanding schedule of administrative duties and organizing and conducting seminar classes for additional investigation of the principles of aesthetic understanding taught in the Foundation's program. In testimony to her early endeavors as an artist, two of her works—an oil painting and a drawing—hang in the Foundation's galleries.

For her immeasurable contributions to art and education, Miss de Mazia was awarded the following honors by the community at large: the Certificate of the Legion of Honor, Chapel of the Four Chaplains, Philadelphia, Pa., (1967); Doctor of Humane Letters, Lincoln University, Oxford, Pa., (1969); Doctor of Fine Arts, St. Joseph's College Philadelphia, Pa., (1970); Cerificate of Merit, from *International Who's Who in Art and Antiques*, (1972); Chevalier of The Order of Arts and Letters, by France's Ministry of Cultural Affairs, (1973); Certificate of Merit for Distinguished Service in Art and Education, from the *Dictionary of International Biography*, (1974); a Philadelphia "Super-Achiever" award, by the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, (1978); Doctor of Fine Arts, La Salle University, Philadelphia, Pa., (1984); Doctor of Humane Letters, Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, Pa., (1986). She is also the subject of biographical notices in *Marquis Who's Who of American Women and World Notables, Marquis Who's Who of American Women, Notable Americans of the Bicentennial Era*, (1976 edition), and *International Register of Profiles*.

The heart and soul of Miss de Mazia's life was her work as an educator. So deeply committed was she to education's cause

that she included in her last will and testament a quotation from John Dewey's writings in which its process, its significance, and its reach are defined:

> Education, as indeed any intelligent human activity, results from the interaction between an individual and his environment—an environment which affects the individual and, in turn, is affected by him. The individual and the world are engaged in a constantly developing situation, and education, therefore, is a continually unfolding process. This interacting process, and this only, leads to genuine experience. From experience arises culture, *i.e.,* the expansion of the range and accuracy of the perceptions. Education, governed by these principles of objective personal experiences—the method of science—develops initiative, inventiveness and the ability to re-adapt one's self to that constantly changing situation, which is life.

This is what, to the thousands of students who have studied at the Foundation, Miss de Mazia showed herself to understand education to be. And in the achievement of its aims, she herself achieved a genius and a greatness of character that, for all of us who benefitted from her teaching, will serve as an impetus and a light to our own achievement.

Miss de Mazia died in Merion, Pa., in 1988.

The de Mazia family, with friend (center back)

Violette de Mazia

Violette de Mazia and Albert C. Barnes

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The Art in Painting
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Dewey, Barnes, Buermeyer, Mullen & de Mazia

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The Barnes Foundation
The Display of its Art Collection
Violette de Mazia

The Lure and Trap of Color Slides in Art Education
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